

**The 1994 Survey of Direct Labor Workers
who are Blind and Employed by NIB
Affiliated Industries for the Blind**



Prepared by

**Mississippi State University
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center
on Blindness and Low Vision**



**in cooperation with the
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By

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BACKGROUND

At the request of National Industries for the Blind (NIB), the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision (RRTC) at Mississippi State University conducted a survey of direct labor workers who are blind and employed in NIB affiliates. The survey is a follow-up to surveys conducted by NIB staff with Polaris Research Associates, Inc. in 1983 and 1987. The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) provided professional consultation and assistance to the RRTC in revising the survey protocol, conducting data analysis, and developing the final report.

Report results can be used by NIB and other agencies, both private and government, to determine some of the employment needs and concerns of persons who are blind and employed in NIB affiliates. This information may be useful in developing or modifying service delivery policies and systems which address the problems and issues currently identified by direct labor workers who are blind. It is the hope and expectation of all persons concerned with this project that the results will lead to increased job satisfaction, productivity, upward mobility, and opportunities for direct labor workers who are blind/visually impaired, or multi-disabled.

Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose of the survey was to enhance the understanding of employment issues expressed by direct labor workers employed by NIB affiliates and to evaluate the satisfaction levels, both with work and the work environment, of these workers. In addition to evaluating the satisfaction levels and perceptions of the employment setting, the researchers were

interested in understanding more about the demographics of the sample, providing a voice for employees to express their opinions regarding public policy issues, and making recommendations for improving employment opportunities for all direct labor workers. The survey results enable comparisons to 1983 and 1987 data.

METHODOLOGY

Interview Protocol Development

Researchers at the RRTC, along with representatives from AFB and NIB, revised, added, and deleted items as appropriate from the 1987 NIB questionnaire. The initial 1983 questionnaire was developed by NIB staff with data analysis completed by Polaris Research Associates, Inc. In 1987, Polaris staff assisted NIB staff in design and development of the questionnaire and the data analysis. The 1994 revisions were made to promote clarity, incorporate questions regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), to include questions related to pre-affiliate employment earnings, current earnings, etc., and to make data more readily interpretable. The questionnaire was field-tested by RRTC staff to ensure reliability and consistency in administration. Prior to data collection, the interview protocol and revised questionnaire were submitted to, and subsequently approved by, the Mississippi State University (MSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects.

Interview Site Selection

Twenty-four NIB affiliates nationwide were chosen for participation in this project from a master list of affiliates obtained from NIB. To insure appropriate representation in the survey,

each affiliate was categorized by structure (i.e., private non-profit or state government administration), wage system (i.e., minimum wage or above only v. minimum wage exempt), geographic location (six agencies from each of the four General Council of Workshops for the Blind regions), and size (i.e., small, medium, large).

Affiliates were then chosen based on a representative sampling of workers by the size of the affiliate (those with over 100 direct labor workers were categorized as large; 50 to 99 direct labor workers were medium; and less than 50 direct labor workers were small) and by region. Within each region, at least one government owned/operated affiliate and one affiliate which paid below minimum wage were included.

Within the above constraints, site selection was sometimes made on an "opportunity" basis necessitated by budget constraints. For example, small affiliates near major airports were non-randomly chosen so multiple sites could be visited, thereby minimizing air travel expenses. Also, a medium-sized facility may have been selected because of its location near a major airport. Affiliates in remote areas of the country may be under-represented due to this selection process. Each affiliate was notified by mail that the work site had been selected for survey inclusion and that data collection dates would be scheduled at a later date.

A total of 500 interviews were planned. At large affiliates, 40 workers were surveyed; at medium-sized affiliates, 25 workers were surveyed; and at small affiliates, 10 workers were surveyed. The survey process included 6 large affiliates, 5 medium affiliates, and 13 small affiliates. Of the affiliates selected, one small, one medium, and two large sites were unable or unwilling, for various reasons, to participate in the project. Alternate sites, matched as

closely as possible for all selection criteria, were contacted and voluntarily agreed to participate.

Employee Selection

In order to select workers for this survey, lists of current employees at each site were obtained from NIB, or from affiliate management. These lists of workers were typically alphabetical, but on occasion, were by seniority of the worker. The sampling plan determined the number of workers to be surveyed at each facility. The total number of workers listed on the employee roster was divided by the number to be surveyed. The resulting figure determined the interval for inclusion in the survey. All workers who participated in the survey were legally blind and engaged in direct labor, according to the employee rosters.

When workers selected were not available for the survey, (due to illness, refusal to participate, lay offs, etc.) researchers continued through the list using the same selection process. In cases where the researcher collected data at a facility for more than one day, persons absent were interviewed, if available, the following day. In some smaller affiliates, every direct labor worker was included in the sample; in other affiliates, many persons were found to be laid off, resulting in the inclusion of all direct labor workers available. A small number of workers selected were not able to participate in the survey because they were employed in vital positions and interruption of their duties would negatively affect production deadlines.

Employees were not interviewed in any particular order, although efforts were made to cause as little disruption as possible in the routine activities of each workplace. It should be noted that this is a survey of workers currently employed and as such,

reflects only the opinions and concerns of those workers. Persons currently laid off may or may not have concerns and opinions that vary significantly from this population.

Interview Process

One of three RRTC professional staff conducted individual interviews of each direct labor worker participating in this project, which resulted in 502 usable surveys. Researchers did not provide advance notification to the affiliate staff regarding which employees would be included in the survey process. Each participant was interviewed in a private setting to insure confidentiality. The attached Interview protocol, which stipulated the voluntary nature and confidentiality of the information collected, was read and explained to each participant.

When interpreters were needed, either because English was not the primary language or due to the need for manual communication, affiliate management provided an interpreter. In all cases, interpreters were affiliate staff.

Workers who were developmentally disabled and/or multi-disabled were included in the survey. In some cases, these workers were unable to respond to all of the questions or were uncertain of some answers to interview questions. For example, some workers expressed difficulty remembering salary information precisely. Additionally, some workers either declined, or were unable to provide some requested information. No systematic comparisons of records were used to confirm the data reported, and names of participants were not recorded.

Interviews typically lasted 30 to 35 minutes; however, some lasted as long as one hour, while others were much shorter. Generally, researchers allowed workers to comment at length as

long as the worker remained focused on the issues addressed in the survey. Also, when using interpreters, the length of time needed to conduct the interview increased.

Sample Characteristics v. Population Characteristics

At the end of FY 1993, NIB affiliates employed a total of 5,213 direct labor workers who were legally blind. This survey includes a sample of 502 workers, which represents almost 10% of the total NIB direct labor population. Of those surveyed, 44% were employed in large affiliates, 26% in medium affiliates, and 30% in small affiliates. This compares to the total NIB direct labor population (based on NIB FY 1993 data) where 48% of the workers were employed in large affiliates, 26% at medium affiliates, and 26% at small affiliates.

Of the persons included in the survey, 23% (n=113) were from Region 1 (Northeast), 31% (n=158) were from Region 2 (Southeast), 24% (n=119) were from Region 3 (Midwest), and 22% (n=112) were from Region 4 (West). The majority (81%) of affiliates included in the survey were administered by private sector entities and paid direct labor workers at or above minimum wage (64%).

LIMITATIONS

1. The information contained in this report is based on comments of employees at work on data collection dates. Workers laid off or absent may or may not have different concerns and responses from workers who were present. When the data collection period spanned more than one day, workers selected for the survey absent on the first day were included the subsequent day, if available.

2. The sample of direct labor workers surveyed represents a stratified systematic sample of the population of direct labor workers, within affiliates selected by the a priori inclusion criteria and constrained by time and budget limitations. Application of truly random sampling of workers nationwide was not possible due to the pragmatic constraints under which the study was conducted. It is believed, however, that the sampling procedures employed were successful in achieving a representative sample of workers, nationwide. It is possible that travel constraints may have resulted in an under-representation of affiliates located in remote areas. Consequently, the reader should be mindful of the above constraints and exercise caution when generalizing the results beyond the present sample of workers.

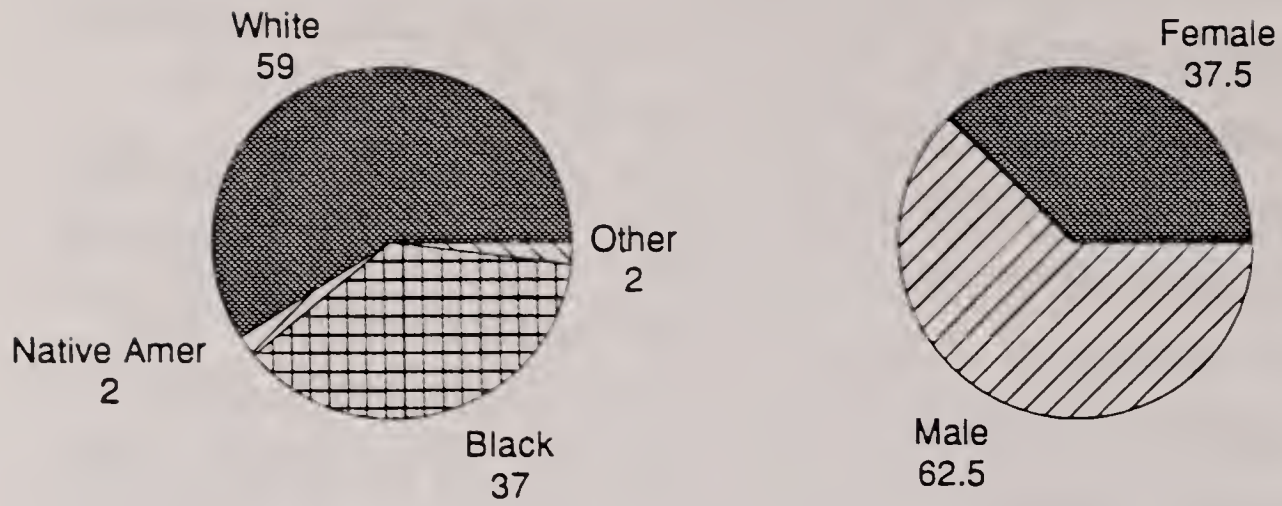
3. Some information included in this report is based on the workers' ability to recall information (i.e., age at onset of vision loss, hourly wage) and is subject to errors associated with self-reports.

DATA ANALYSIS

Demographic Characteristics

As a group, the majority of workers were white (59%), male (63%), unmarried (68%), and financially responsible for supporting themselves only (57%). (Figure 1, p.8) The mean age of the group was 44 years, with a range of 18 to 89 years. (Figure 2, p.8) Most workers belonging to non-white groups were black (37%). Only 5% (n=23) of the workers were of Hispanic origin. The 68% of

Race and Gender by Percent



23 or 5% Indicated
Hispanic origin

Figure 1
Age
by Percent

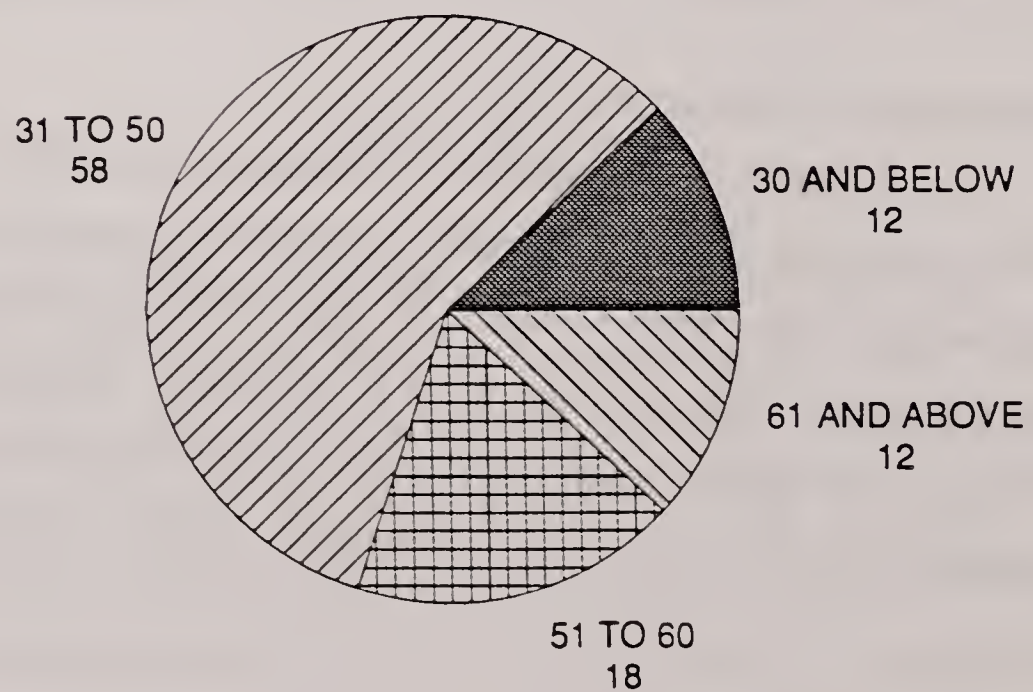


Figure 2

unmarried persons included 43% who had never been married, 4% who were separated, 16% who were divorced, and 5% who were widowed. (Figure 3, p.10)

Approximately one-third of the workers were currently living with a spouse. One in three (32%) of those surveyed had children in the home, and 30% had some other person in the home, typically a parent or parents. Approximately 69% of the workers lived alone. There was no significant difference between males or females, or between minority and non-minority groups regarding the likelihood of living alone. (Figure 4, p.10)

Education

The mean level of completed education of the workers was about the tenth grade; however, this included those who received no education at all (1%, n=5), and those with college degrees (3%, n=16). Just over 63% of the direct labor workers were high school graduates. (Figure 5, p.11) The majority (85%) of these graduates had a high school diploma or equivalency degree, with only 15% stating that they had certificates, which may reflect participation in special education classes. Educational experiences were predominantly at public schools (56%) with about one in five (21%) of those surveyed attending Schools for the Blind exclusively. Only 3% of the workers had attended a private school only, and 15% attended a combination of a school for the blind and a public school.

Age at Onset and Level of Vision

About half (52%) of the workers have been blind since birth, with the other half being adventitiously blind. Of those surveyed, 3 of 4 workers (75%) were blind before reaching 21 years of age,

Marital Status by Gender

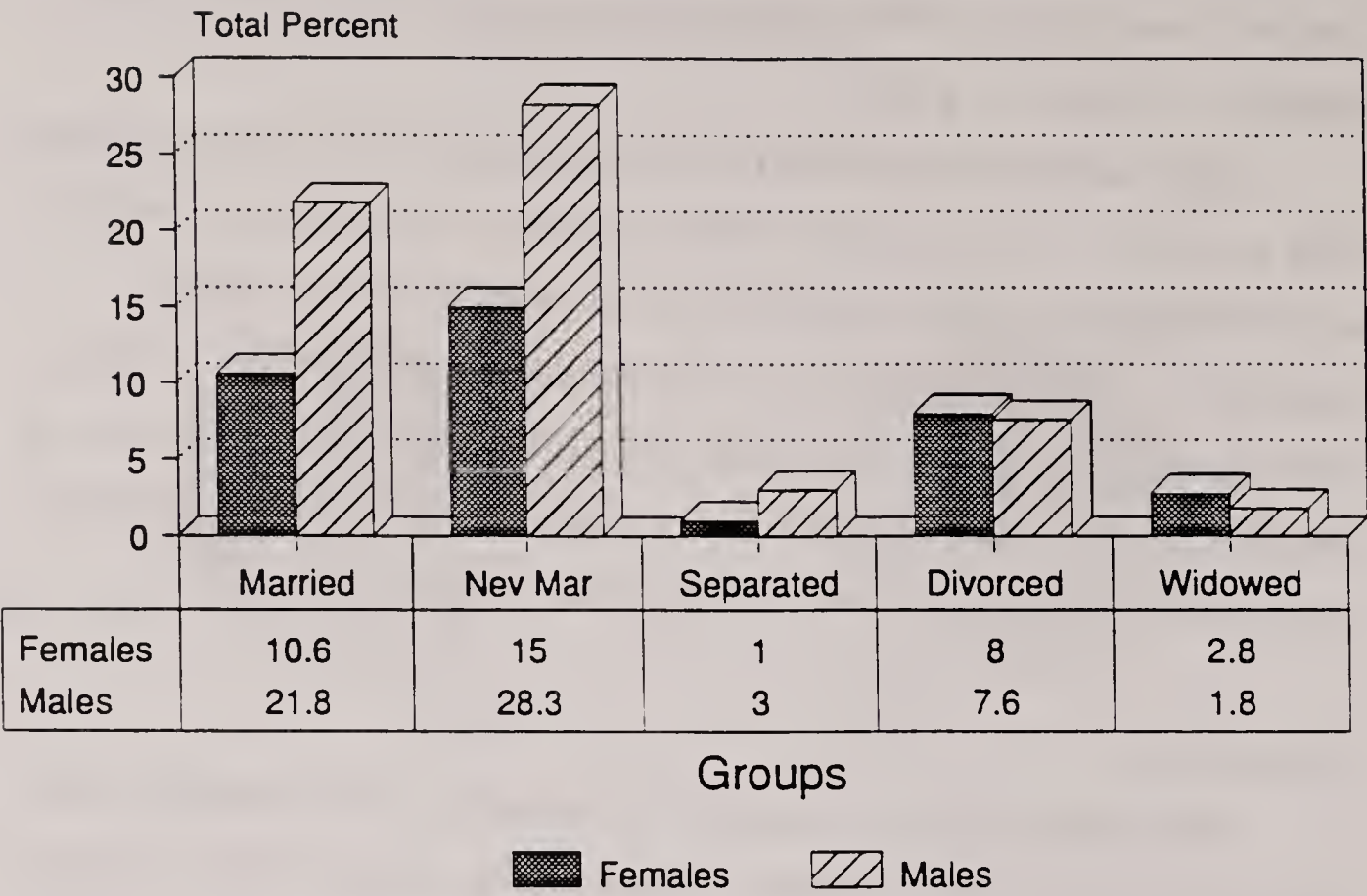
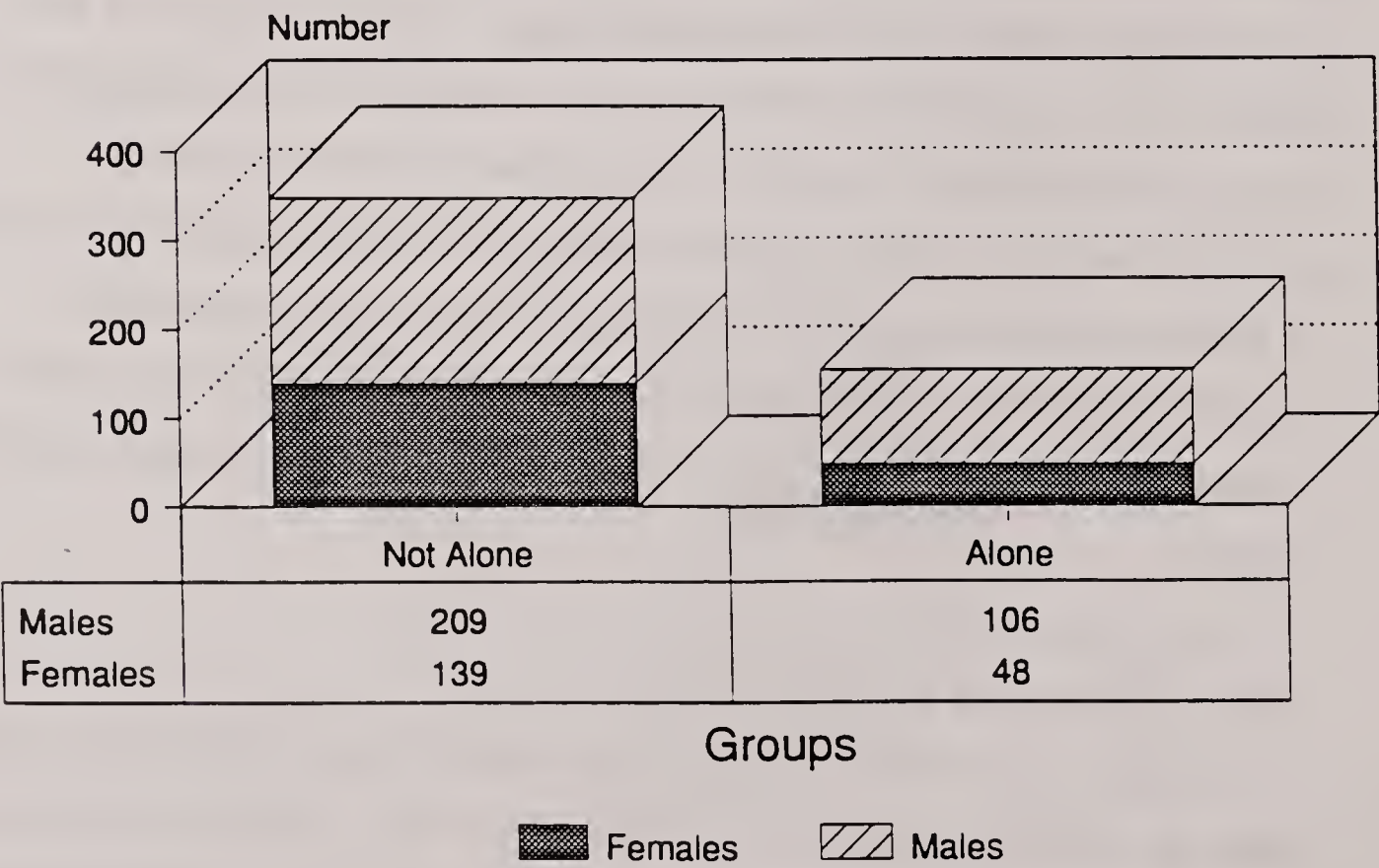


Figure 3

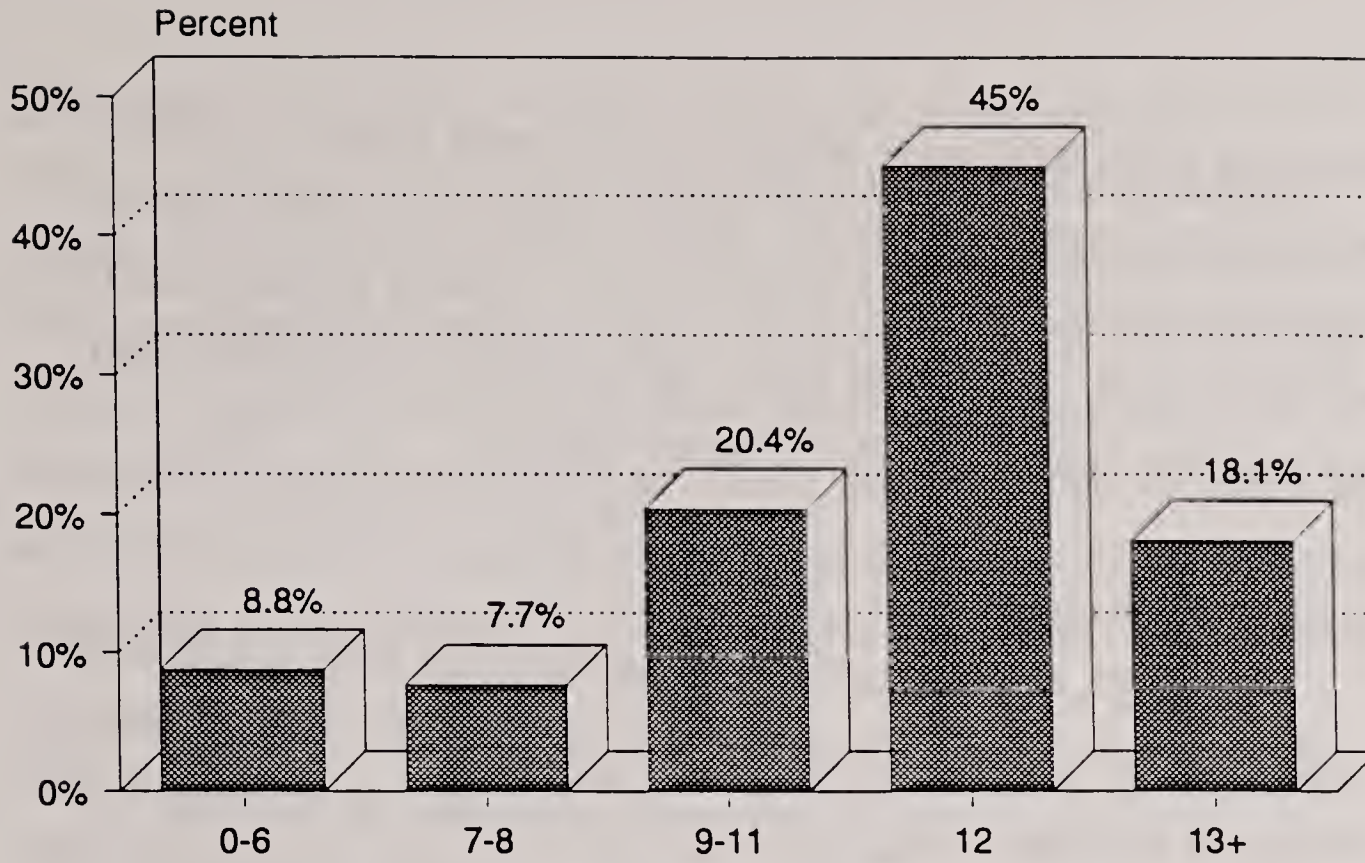
Living Arrangement by Gender



Male-Female ratio unaffected by living arrangement

Figure 4

Educational Levels



Grade Level
Figure 5

Vision by Percent

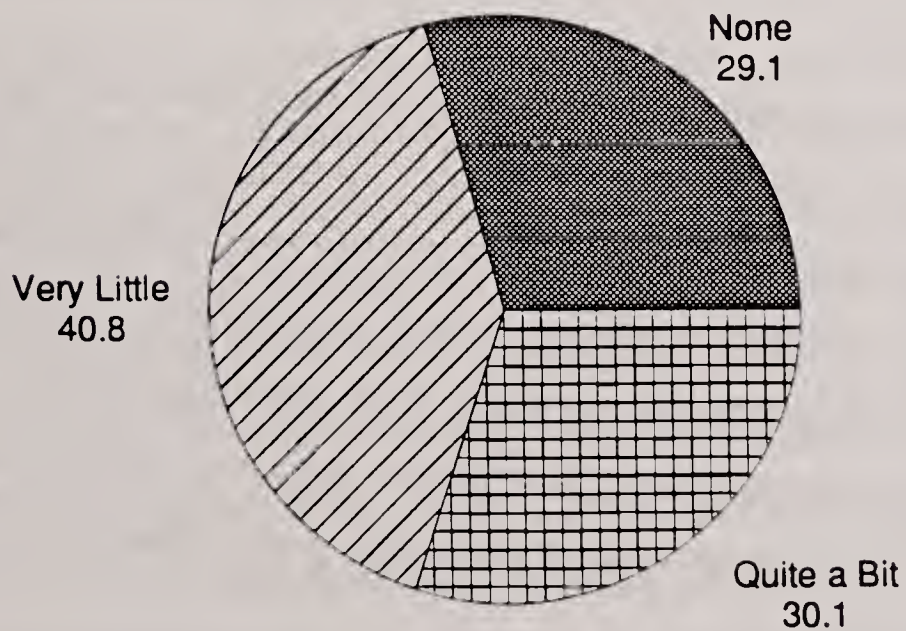


Figure 6

while over half (56%) were blind before 6 years of age. Fifteen percent of the workers became legally blind at, or above, age 30. When describing their own usable vision, 30% of workers said they had "quite a bit," 41% said they had "very little," and 29% said they had "no usable vision." (Figure 6, p.11)

Reading Medium

Although 28% of the workers stated that they could read Grade II Braille, only 16% stated that Braille was their preferred method of reading. The most commonly preferred reading methods were tape cassette/talking books (33%) and large print (32%). The 16% of persons who preferred Braille are probably able to use cassette tapes as well. There was a strong relationship between the ability to use Braille and the age of onset of blindness; those persons who lost their vision at an early age were more likely to read Grade II Braille.

Transportation

Workers spent an average of 30 minutes per day getting to work (one-way), with 16% of workers spending one hour or more. Workers were most likely to use a public bus (30%); however, 27% relied on para-transit systems, which represents a large increase in the use of para-transit systems from previous years. This increased use of para-transit systems may be due to passage, enforcement and increased knowledge of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

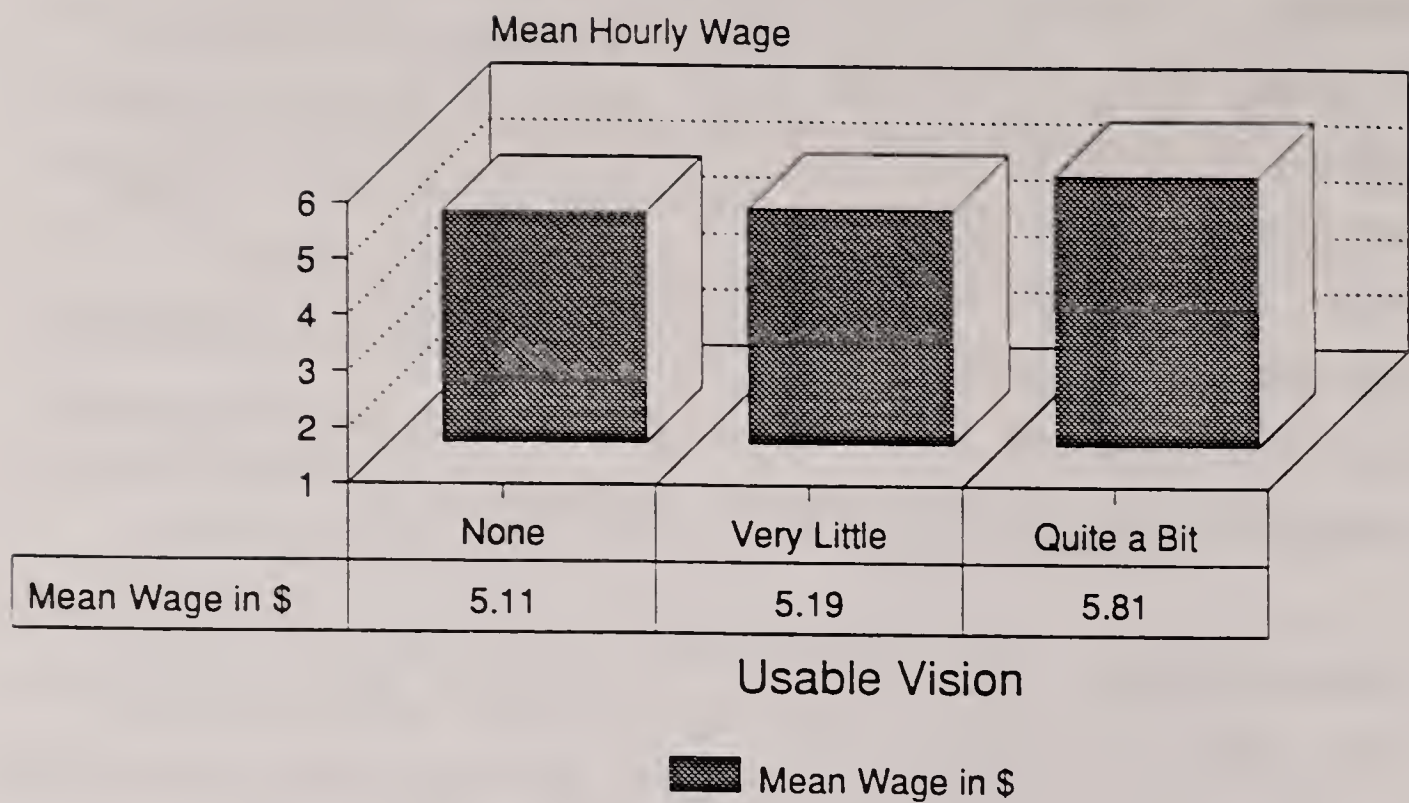
Employment

Earnings The mean weekly wage for the group was \$191, or \$5.36 per hour. Persons who described themselves as having "quite a bit" of usable vision earned significantly higher salaries than those persons with "no usable vision" or "very little" usable vision. (Figure 7, p.14) This discrepancy was frequently mentioned by direct labor staff. There was, however, no difference in the rate of pay for males compared to females, nor for minority compared to non-minority groups. (Figure 8, p.14)

Hours Worked The overwhelming majority (98%) of workers were engaged in work over 20 hours per week, with a mean of approximately 37 hours of work per week. More than half (63%) of those surveyed worked 40 hours per week. Workers employed less than 20 hours per week usually attributed their part-time status to medical reasons.

Work Experience When workers who participated in employment prior to their loss of vision (31%) were asked why they left their previous job, 61% stated that they had been laid off or fired due to their loss of vision. A majority (64%) of direct labor workers have participated in other employment since their vision loss. The most common reasons for leaving the job acquired after loss of vision were: plant closed/work force reduction (18%), fired/laid off due to blindness and family/personal reasons (17% each), and part time/seasonal work (15%). Only 24% of workers had been employed in another facility-based work program. Of those, just over half (57%) had been employed in a facility-based work

Pay Increases with Usable Vision



Pay slightly higher for those with "quite a bit" of usable vision

Figure 7

Wage per Hour Unaffected by Gender and Minority Status

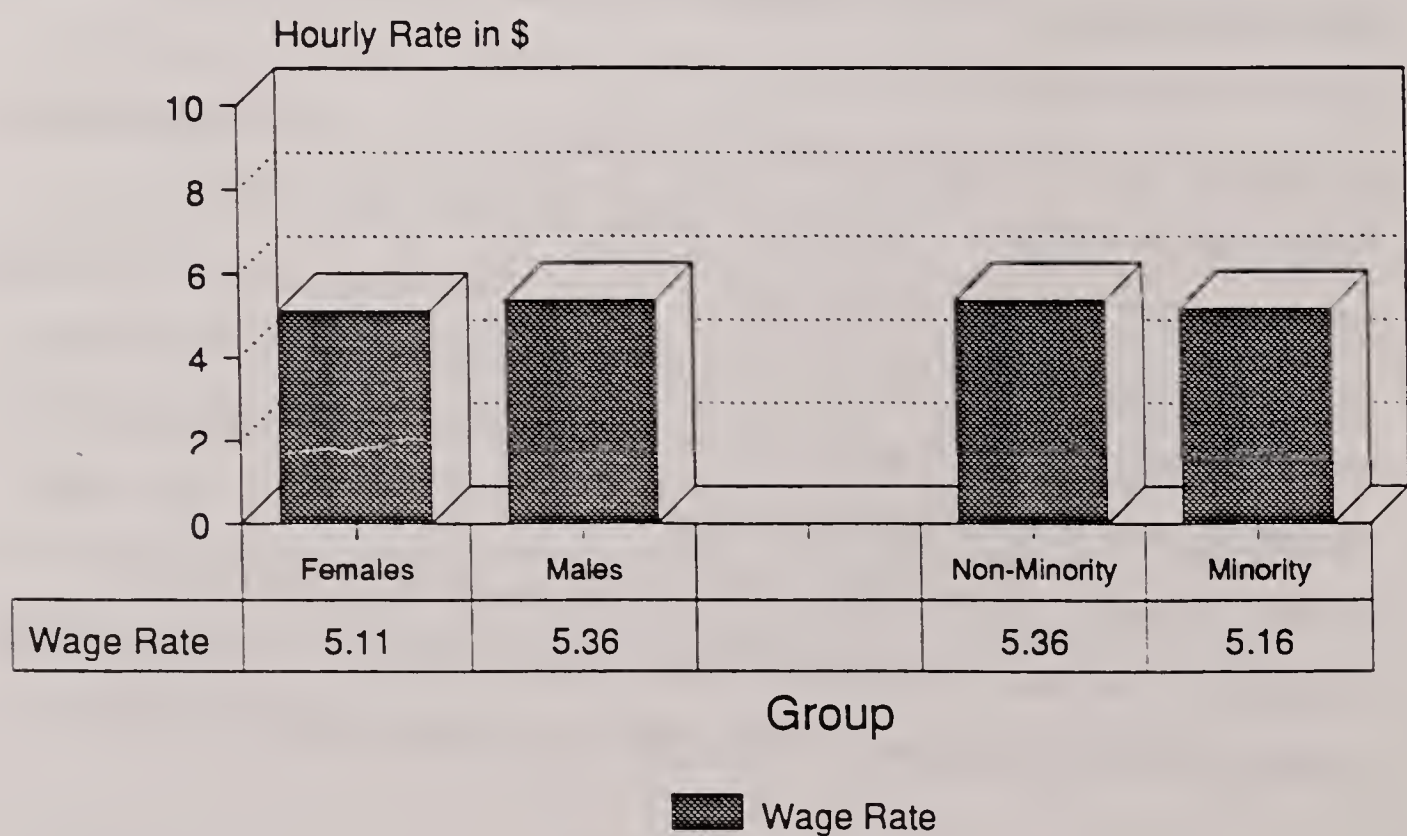


Figure 8

program for the blind, while the remainder were employed in another system, such as Goodwill agencies.

Fringe Benefits Most (70%) workers were familiar with their employee fringe benefits. Verbal explanation from agency staff was the primary method (59%) in which workers learned about the fringe benefits package available to them. Other workers cited an employee manual (21%). Only 6 of every 100 workers stated that their benefits were not explained to them.

Training

Almost two-thirds (63%) of the workers received some type of training services, usually from another agency (70%), prior to employment in the NIB affiliate. Almost 9 of 10 workers (88%) had been served by a state rehabilitation agency. Over half (52%) attributed their placement at the NIB affiliate to a referral by their Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor. Almost one fourth (24%) of the workers, however, stated they obtained their job on their own, or independently of any other agency.

Job satisfaction

In response to the question, "How satisfied are you working here?", 61% indicated they were "satisfied" (40%) or "very satisfied" (21%). The number of workers indicating they were "dissatisfied" (10%) or "very dissatisfied" (4%), remains low; however, it is up slightly from the previous two surveys where these combined figures were 6% in 1983 and 10% in 1987. There was a similar decrease in the number of workers who were "satisfied" and "very satisfied", with 61% of the workers in those categories in 1994, 66% in 1987, and 73% in 1983. (Figure 9, p.16)

Satisfaction Trends

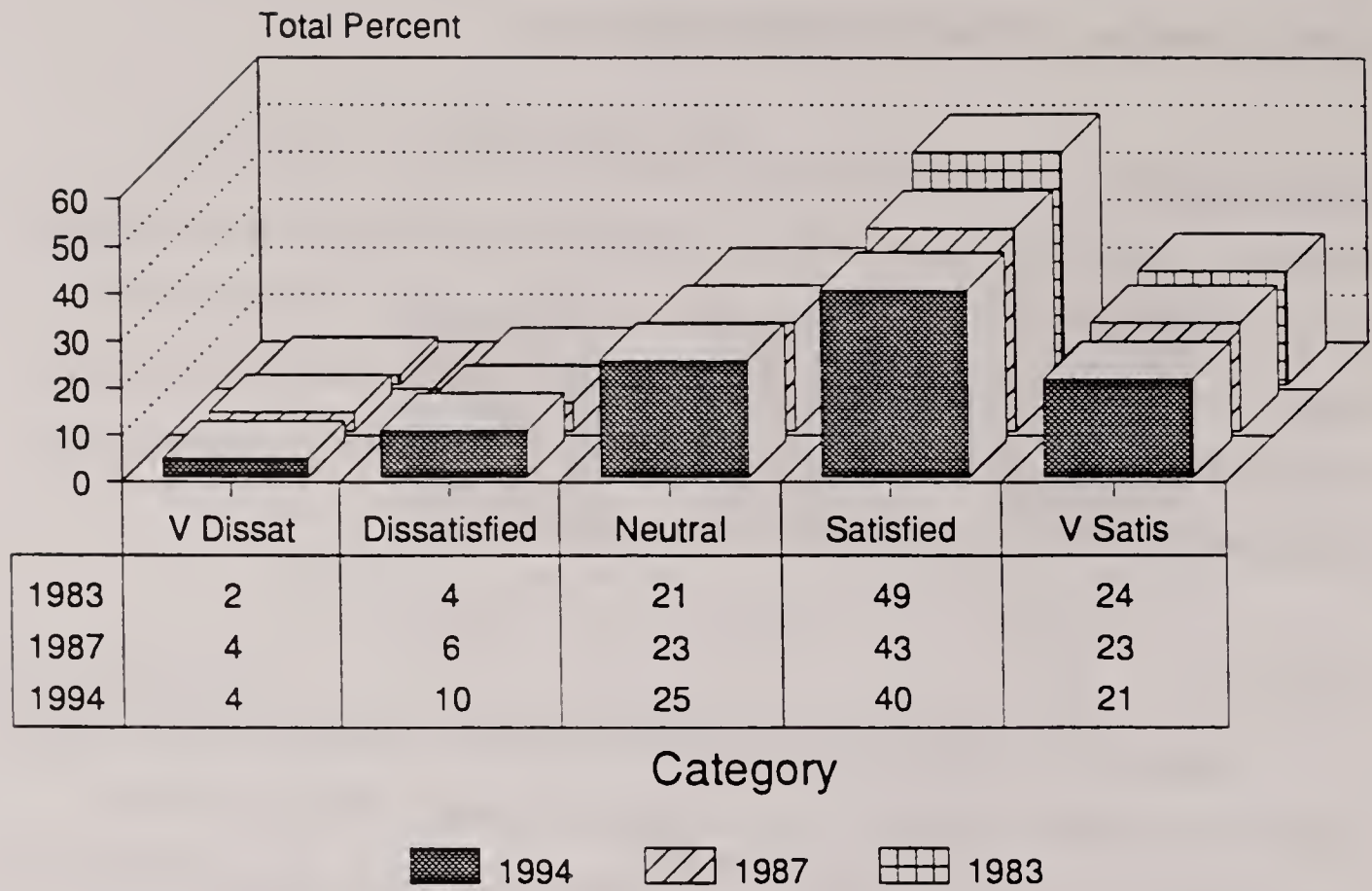


Figure 9
Satisfaction Unaffected by
Amount of Usable Vision

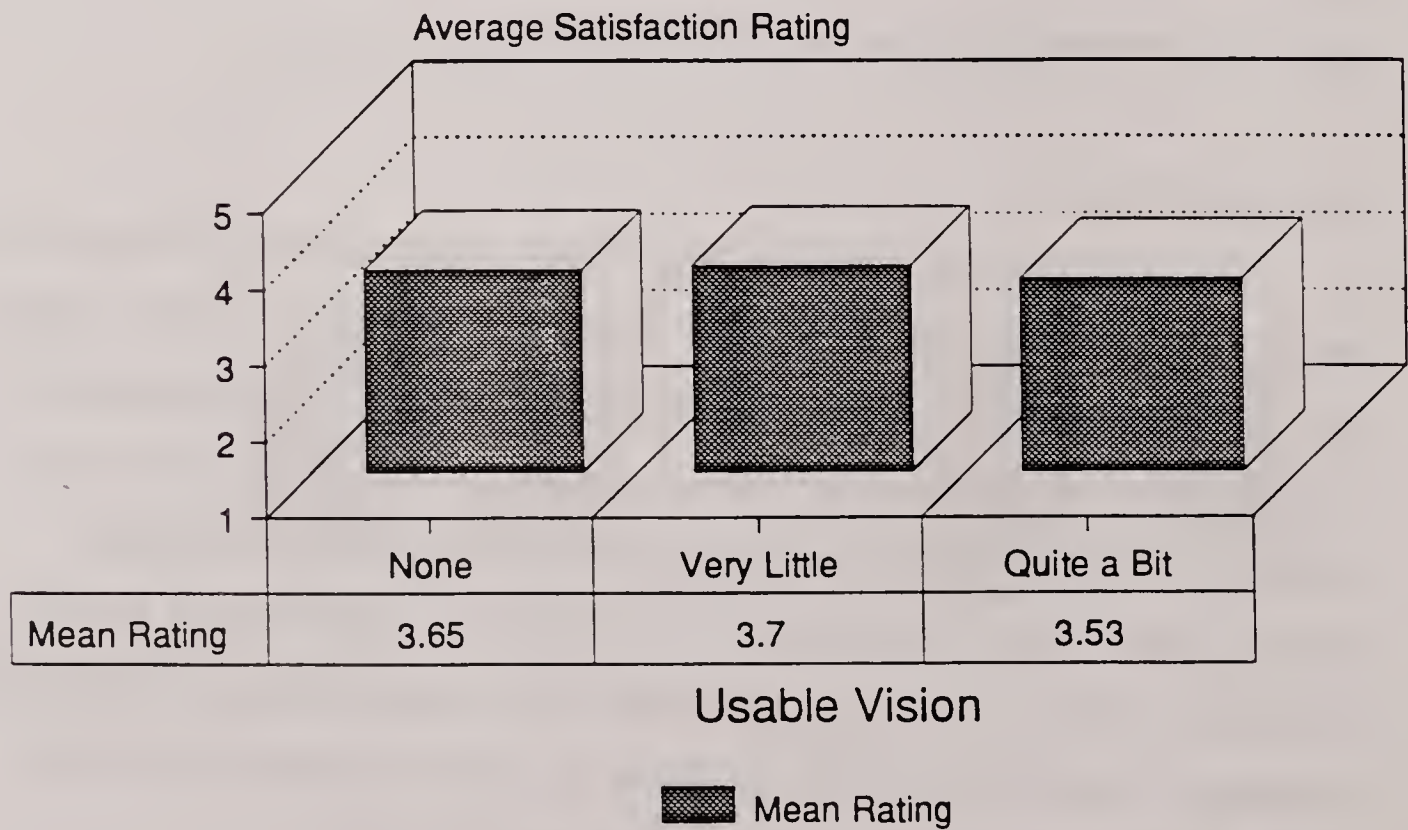


Figure 10

There was no significant relationship between the level of job satisfaction and the degree of visual loss; (Figure 10, p.16) nor was there any relationship between the level of job satisfaction and gender or job satisfaction and minority status. (Figure 11, p.18) The same is not true, however, for educational level. As the educational level of the worker rises, the dissatisfaction level also rises. (Figure 12, p.18) Workers with 5 or less years of experience with the affiliate were more satisfied than workers with more experience. (Figure 13, p.19) Workers over 50 years of age, however, were more satisfied than younger workers. (Figure 14, p.19) The number of neutral responses rose slightly from 21% in 1983, to 23% in 1987, and to 25% in 1994. Persons who gave a neutral response did not always state neutral feelings about their employment. Rather, these workers indicated they had strong conflicting negative and positive feelings, leading them to a neutral response.

Good Points about Work Environment

When asked to list "the good points of working here," workers had the opportunity to generate multiple responses. Only 1% of those surveyed could not list a good point about their work environment. Interaction with co-workers was cited as a good point by 43% of workers. Indeed, many workers stated that social interaction with others was the main reason they continue to engage in direct labor work. Almost one-third (30%) of workers indicated that the staff/management were good points of working at the NIB affiliate. While more difficult to document through statistical analysis, a large number of persons commented at length about the help and support they received from affiliate staff,

Satisfaction Unaffected by Gender and Minority Status

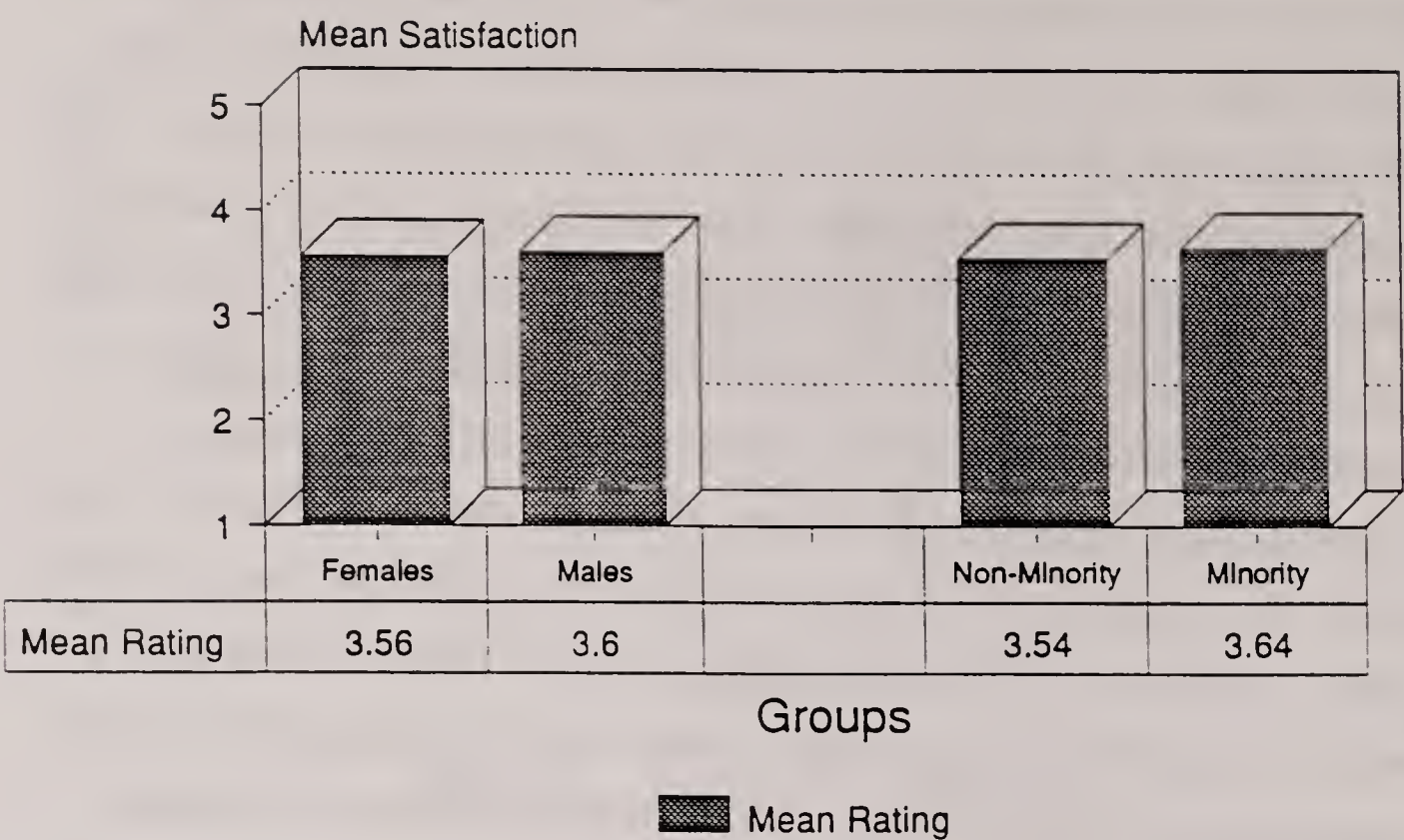
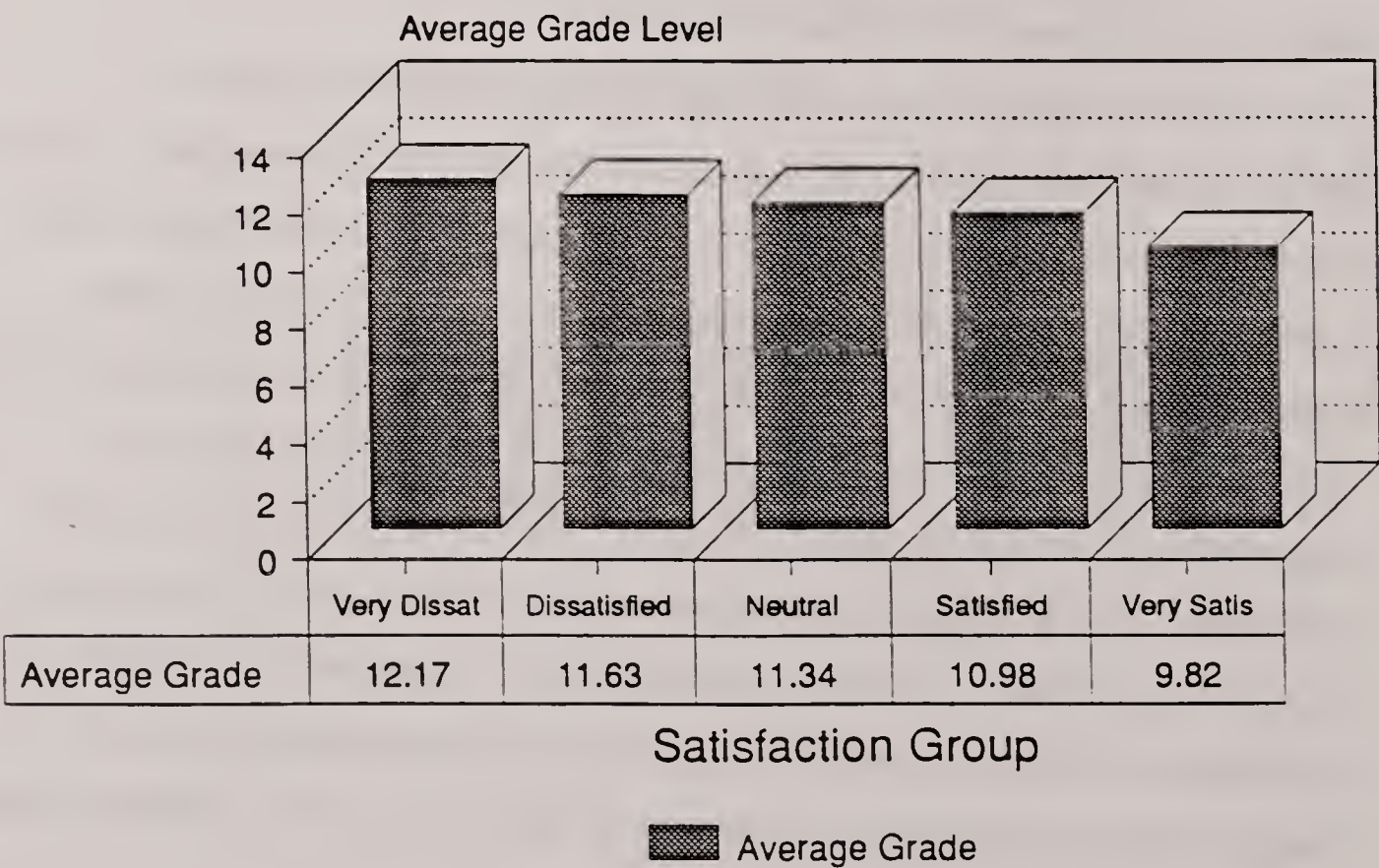


Figure 11

Satisfaction and Education



Dissatisfaction higher among more highly educated

Figure 12

Satisfaction Highest Among Employees with Least Work Experience

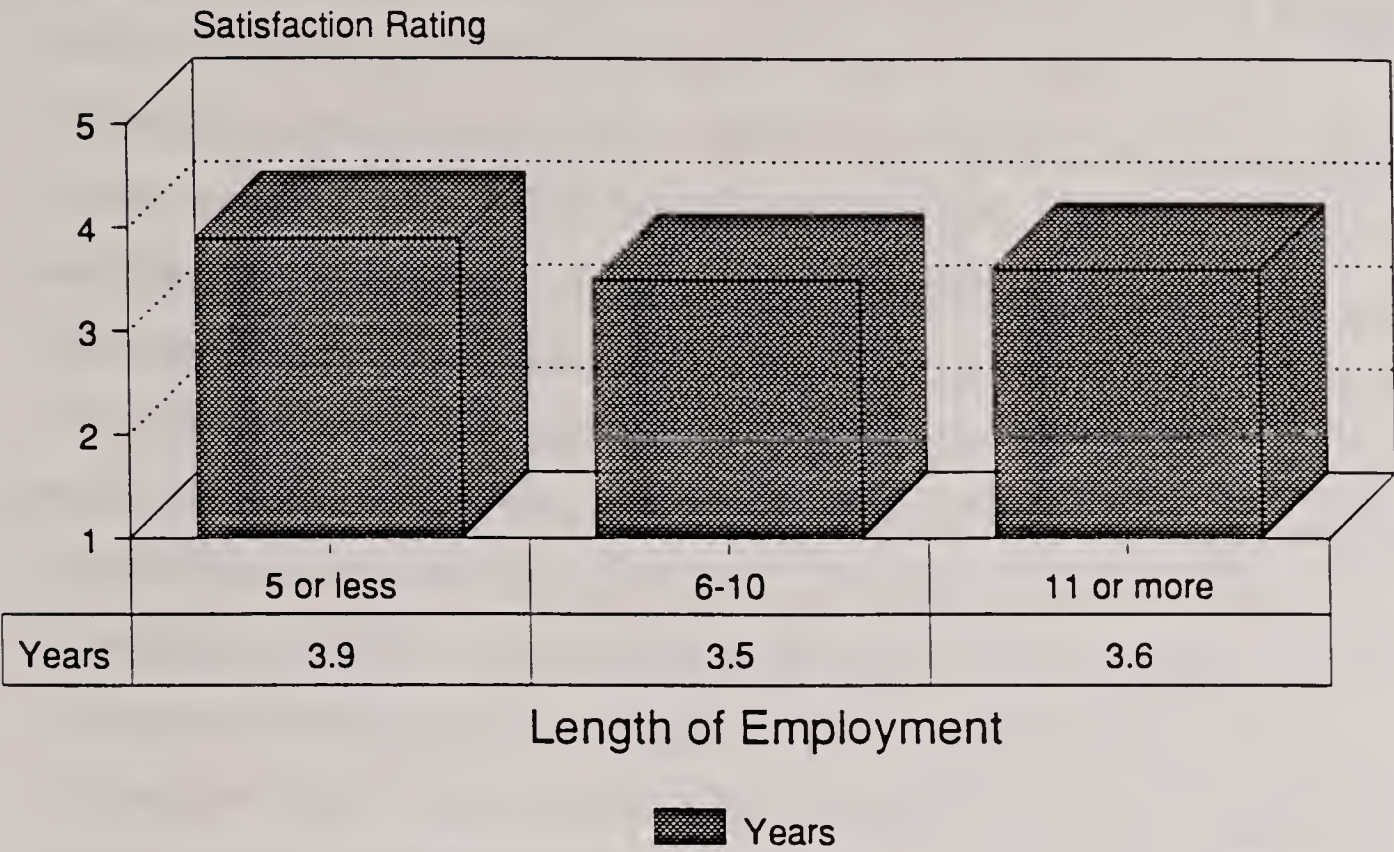
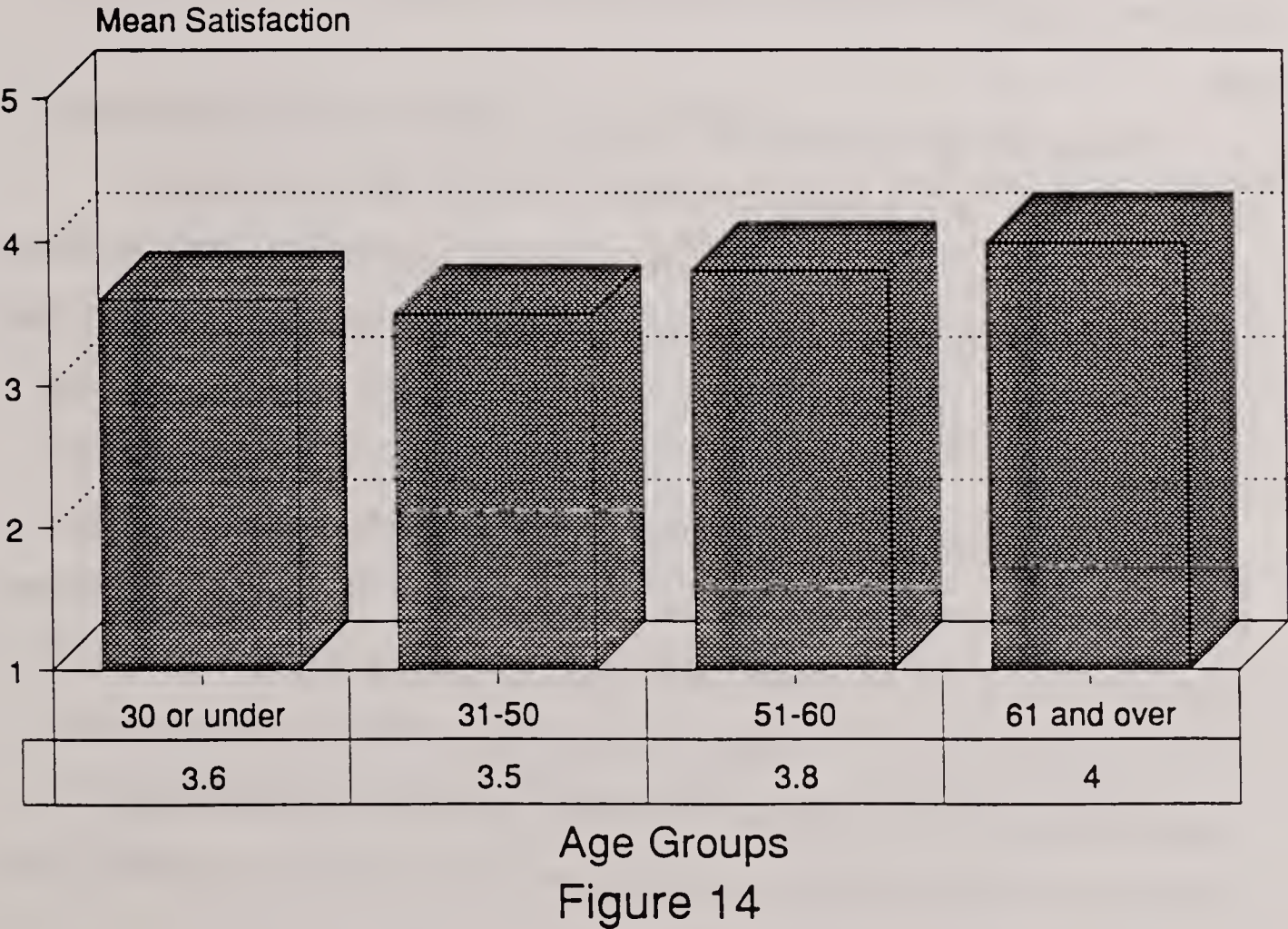


Figure 13

Satisfaction Increases with Age



stating such things as "they will do anything for you." Many workers were quite "emotional" and very positive about the staff.

Another positive point mentioned about staff and management was flexibility. Some managers allowed workers to choose their number of work hours per week. This system was very popular with workers earning a high hourly rate, as it allowed them to reduce their work hours, as needed, to retain unearned income. Others not receiving unearned income were appreciative of the opportunity to work additional hours and earn overtime pay.

When asked to point out the "good points of working here," 21% of workers interviewed cited their fringe benefits package. Included in this category were items such as flexibility in work schedules, insurance plans, and paid time off. Some workers listed fringe benefits as both a good point and a bad point, indicating that they were pleased with the benefits package currently available, but desired additional benefits, i.e., a retirement plan in addition to insurance, or more paid time off, etc.

The same percentage of workers (21%) stated that the type of work was a "good point of working here" indicating some workers were quite pleased with the work duties assigned to them. Additionally, workers commented positively about the type of work available when they were given the opportunity to rotate among various jobs.

More than one in four (27%) of the workers cited simply having stable employment as a "good point." Almost one in three workers (31%) listed other good points, such as "just being able to get out of the house." Only a comparatively few persons listed independence/self-sufficiency (12%), reduced/minimal job pressure (13%), physical working conditions (9%) or working with

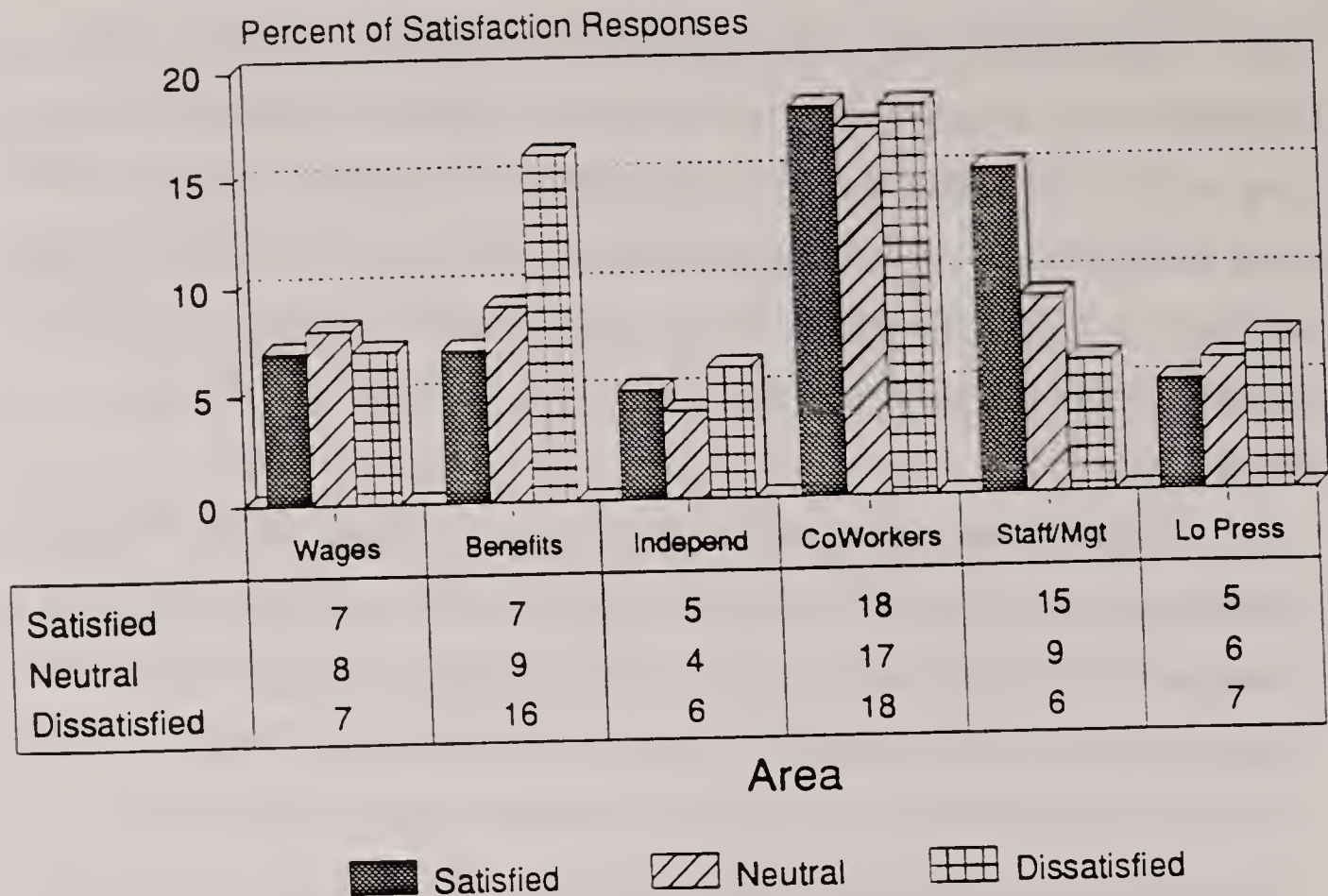
other blind/disabled people (15%) as good points. Some (17%) reported that wages was a "good point." Workers commented frequently that although some aspects of their jobs were not ideal, they were grateful to have the opportunity to work. Many of these workers expressed a desire to see their affiliate expand, thereby making more employment opportunities available to others. (Figure 15, p.22)

Workers were also asked to name "the main good point of working here" in an effort to identify the most pertinent issue of the multiple good points. The most frequent response was stable employment (26%), with 9% of the workers stating wages. One in 10 workers (10%) were not able to name a main good point of working in their facility. Approximately 15% of the workers had varying responses, the most common of which was "having a job" or "having something to do". Only 8% of those interviewed identified their co-workers as the "main good point". (Figure 16, p.23)

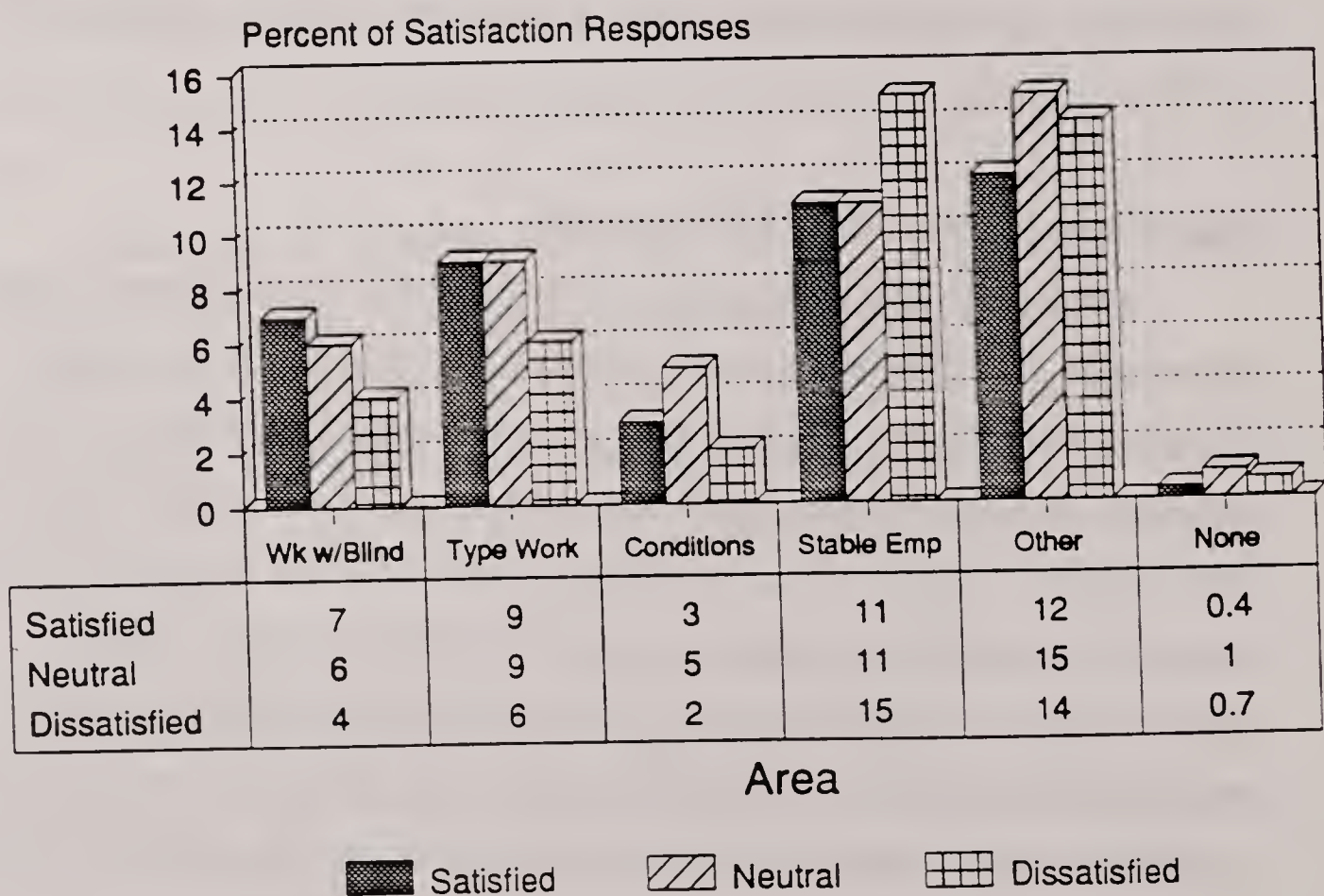
Bad Points about Work Environment

When asked to list any "bad points of working here," which generated multiple responses, 30% of the workers stated there were no bad points. One in five workers stated that wages were too low. Some workers cited the method in which piece rates were determined. Based upon comments made during these interviews, there appeared to be wide-spread lack of information among workers about how piece rates were determined. Many workers reported having information that piece rates were determined in an unfair manner, either because the rate was set on the productivity standards of sighted workers, or due to some other reason.

Satisfied Workers Identify Co-Workers, Staff/Management, Stable Employment as Most Often Mentioned Good Points



Part A



Part B

Figure 15

Main Good Points by Percent

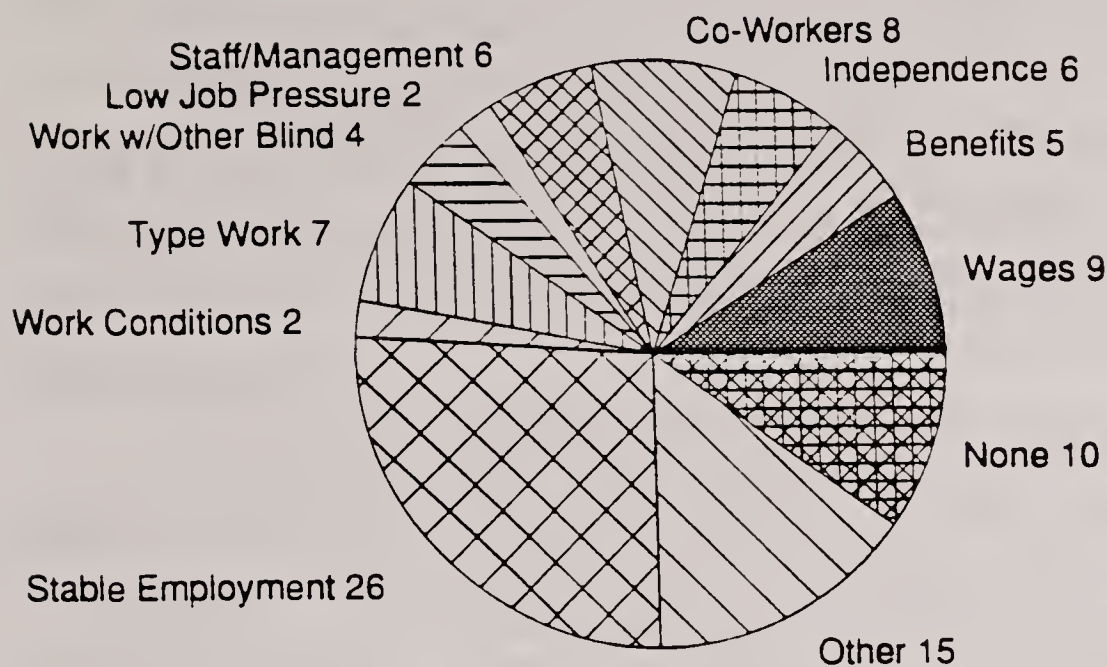


Figure 16

Main Bad Points by Percent

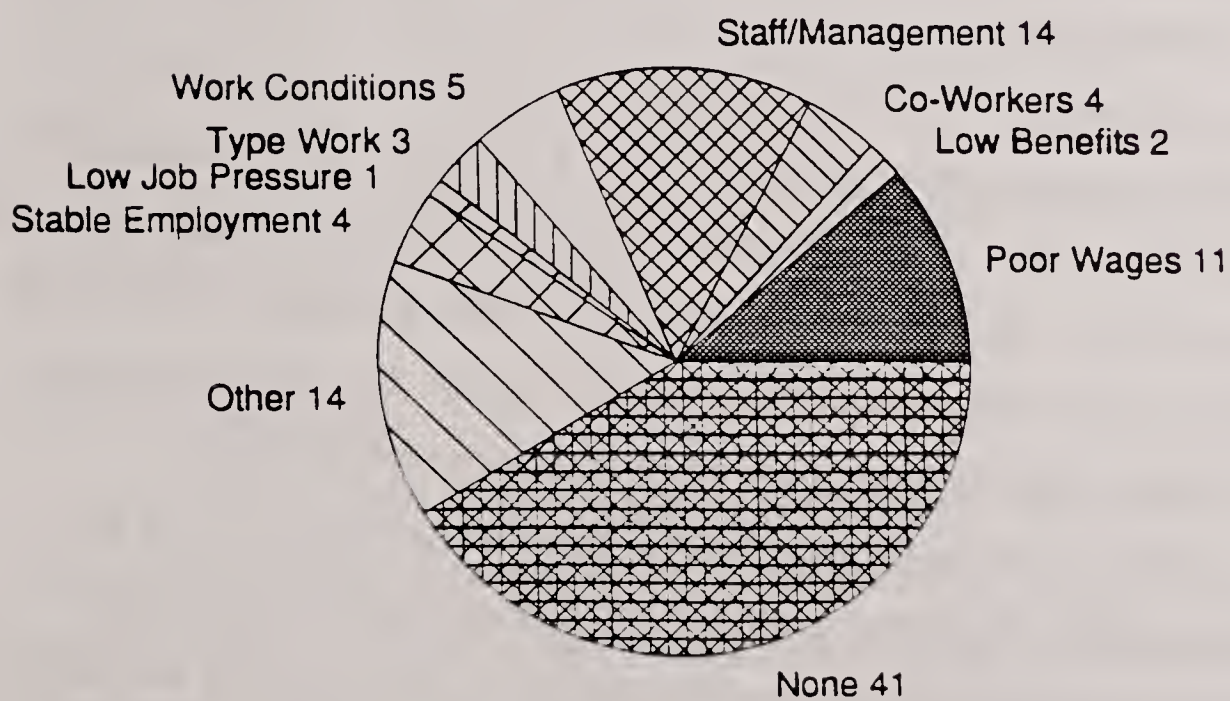


Figure 17

A concern among workers who listed staff as a bad point (25%) was how workers were treated by staff. Several workers at different affiliates stated that staff "talk to me like I am a dog." Some stated they were treated like children. Many workers clarified their responses by stating that while the Director of the affiliate treated them well, the direct supervisor or plant manager did not, or vice versa.

Some workers said affiliate management laid them off when work orders were low while "front office" staff continued to work and get paid. The unpredictability of the work appeared to cause a great deal of anxiety among many employees. Other negative comments directed toward staff and management included a perceived tendency of management to lay off the most severely visually impaired workers first and most frequently, and giving jobs of higher status and salary to "the chosen few." The concept that there was a group of workers within each affiliate who received preferential treatment was widespread. When asked what these workers had to do to get into this exclusive group, most workers stated that all one had to do was "play the game." "be a yes man" or assume a similar role.

A few workers mentioned concerns about gender-related issues. A small number of workers commented that male staff sexually harassed female workers and visitors in the presence of direct labor staff. Some female workers stated that male workers were given job tasks that commanded more prestige and higher salaries, although statistical analysis of the data demonstrated that males and females were paid at comparable rates.

The lack of sufficient fringe benefits was cited by a few workers (8%). Workers commented upon the discrepancies between the benefits package available to direct labor workers and

the benefits package available to staff. Most of the workers who commented on this reported that affiliate staff received substantially better benefits than the workers, thus creating both a hierarchy within the affiliate and significant resentment among the workers toward the staff. Workers appeared to perceive themselves as doing the hard work that allowed staff to have these superior benefits.

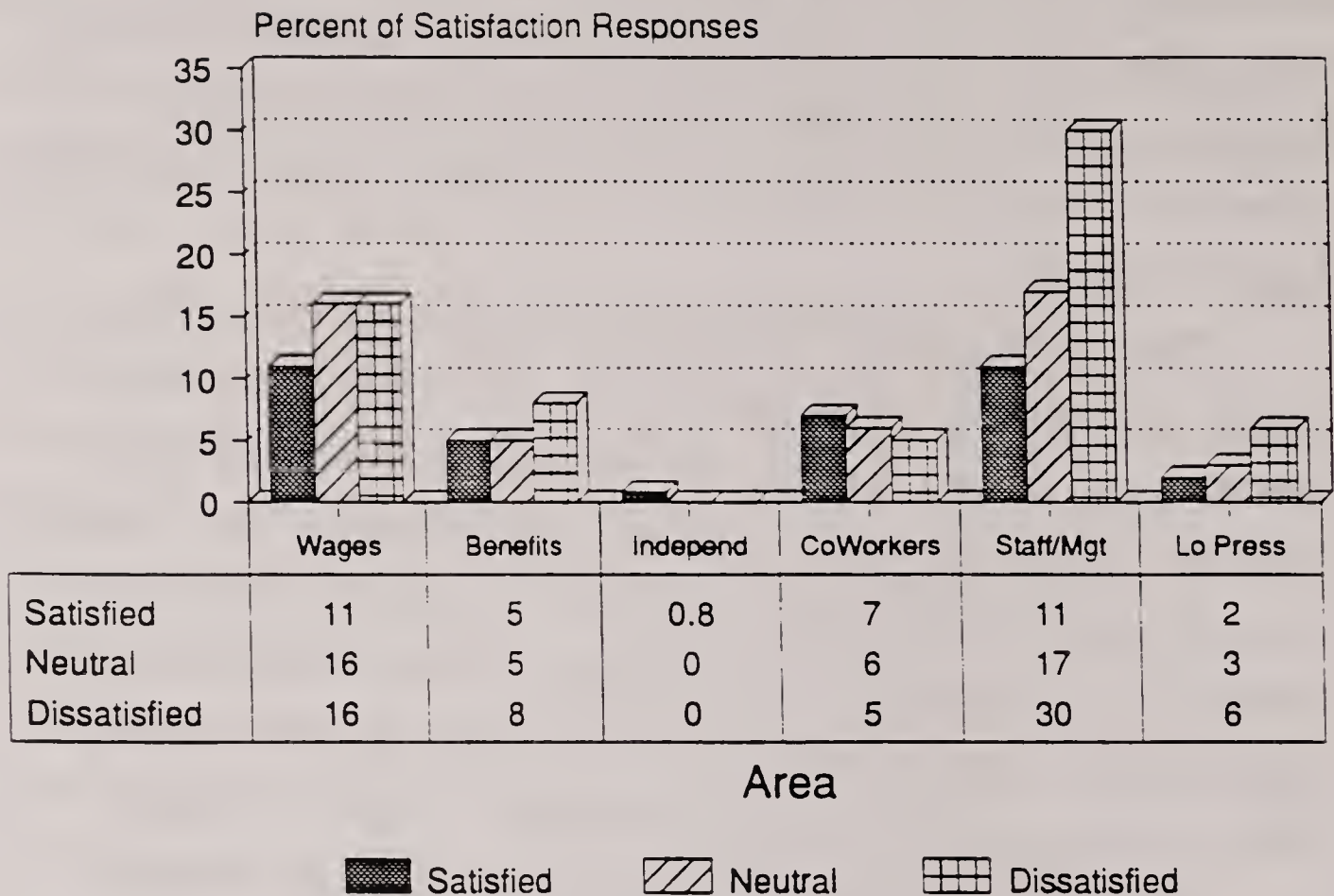
There were relatively few negative comments about either the type of work (6%) or the physical conditions (12%) of the work environment. Those workers who did mention problems with physical conditions reported problems with noise or dust. Other workers reported that safety issues were a concern, both in the physical work area and with equipment. These workers stated that machinery maintenance was inadequate, thereby causing a danger to them and reducing productivity. (Figure 17, p.23)

There did not appear to be any clear consensus among workers about the "main bad point of working here." Forty-one percent of the workers said there was no main bad point. The most frequently cited main bad point, identified by 14% of the workers, was the staff. Wages were cited as a "main bad point" by 11% of workers. Of the 14% of responses that fell into the category of "other," many referred again to the issue of those with greater levels of vision having greater work opportunities within the affiliate. (Figure 18, p.26)

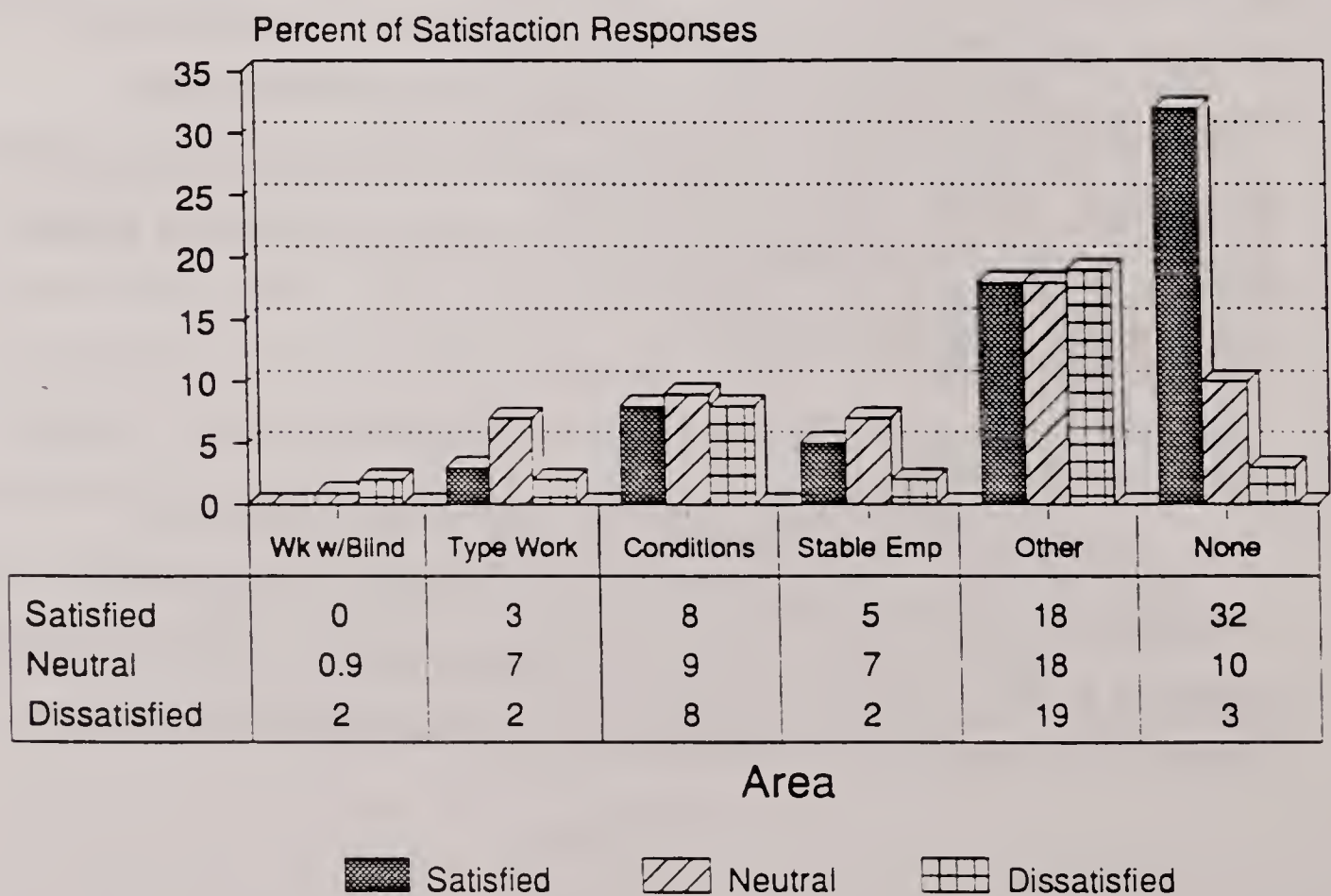
Job Discrimination

A total of 37% of the workers stated that they had experienced discrimination due to blindness in getting hired or in keeping a job. Several workers commented that employers turned down their requests for employment due to fear of escalating

Dissatisfied Workers Identify Staff/ Management, Wages, "Other" as Most Often Mentioned Bad Points



Part A



Part B

Figure 18

Workers Identify Wages, Co-Workers, Staff/Management, Stable Employment as Salient Employment Factors

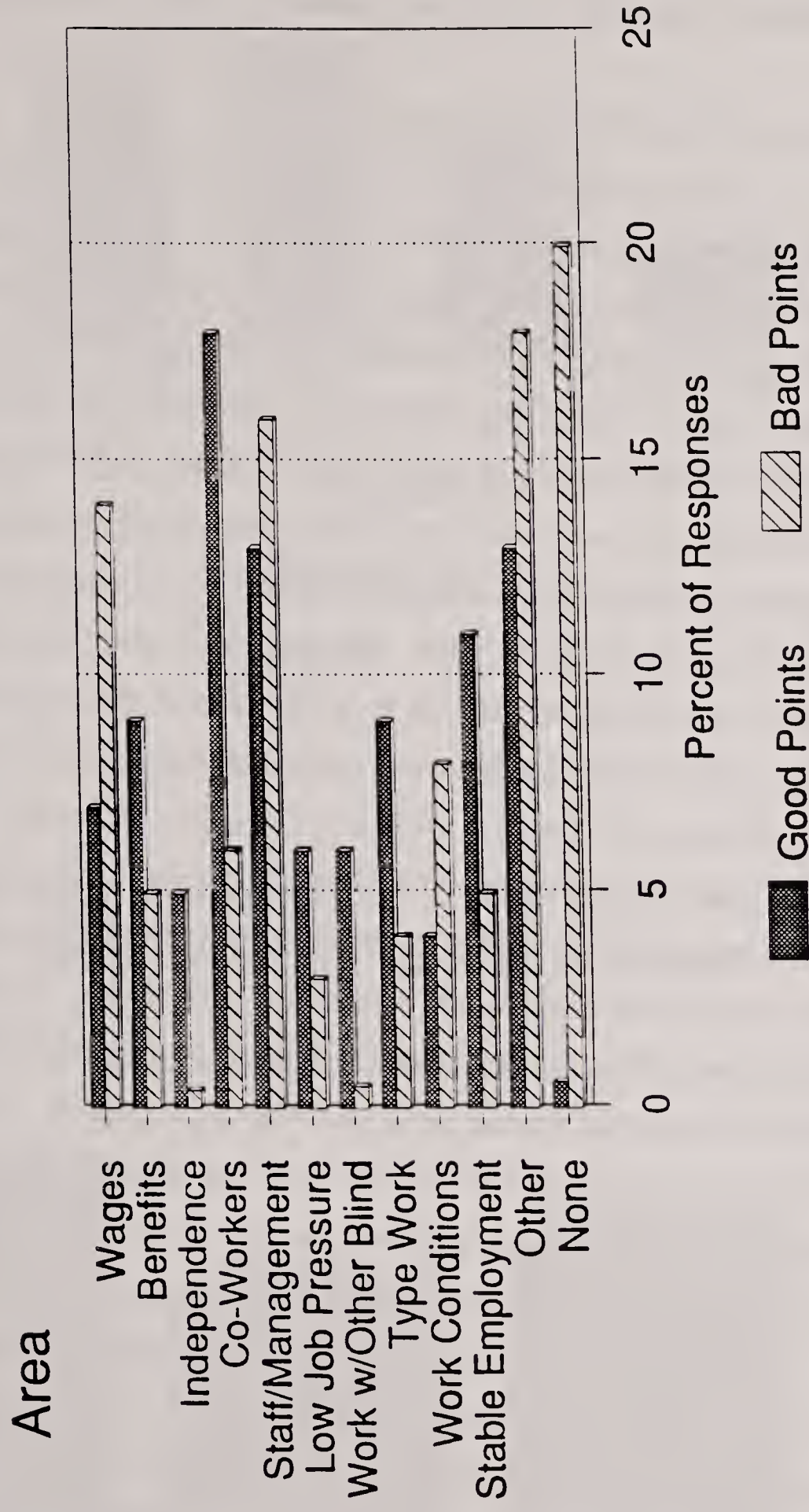


Figure 19

workers compensation insurance premiums. Several workers with residual vision stated that employers had offered them jobs, then rescinded the job offer upon learning of their visual impairment.

General Industry Employment

The majority (74%) of workers stated that they had not attempted to locate or secure jobs in the general employment sector since beginning employment at the NIB affiliate. Of those who had not tried to find employment in general industry, more than one in four (27%) stated that they had not tried because they preferred their current placement. Males and females sought jobs in the general sector at the same rate. Neither minority nor non-minority respondents sought general sector employment at a significantly different rate. Workers who were the most satisfied were least likely to pursue employment in general industry. Typically, workers who were older were less likely to seek employment in general industry. (Figure 20, p.29)

About one in ten (11%) of the workers who had not tried to find employment in the general sector stated that they had not tried because employers would not hire them. Only a few stated age (6%), other disabilities (1%), lack of education or experience (4%), or lack of transportation (4%) as a reason. Of the 74% of workers who stated that they had not sought employment in the general sector, almost 36% stated they had not considered looking for a job elsewhere and appeared bewildered regarding a reason.

Of those persons who found employment in the general sector, or 27% of those who tried, most were fired, laid off or quit due to lack of work or the attitudes of co-workers and management. Of those who unsuccessfully pursued employment

Seeking Employment in General Industry Decreases Over Age 50

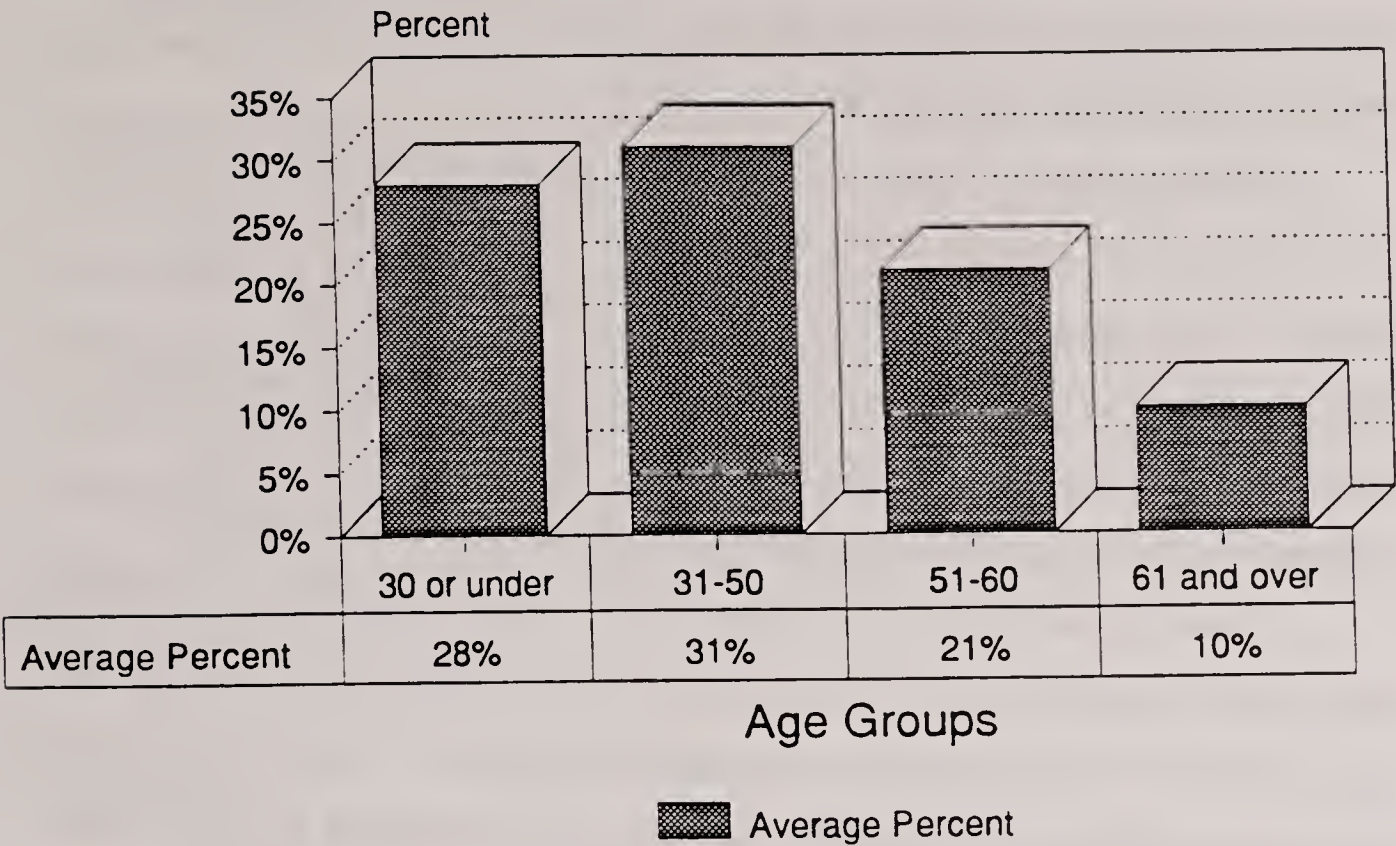


Figure 20

Satisfaction Highest Among Workers Who Prefer Working at NIB Affiliates

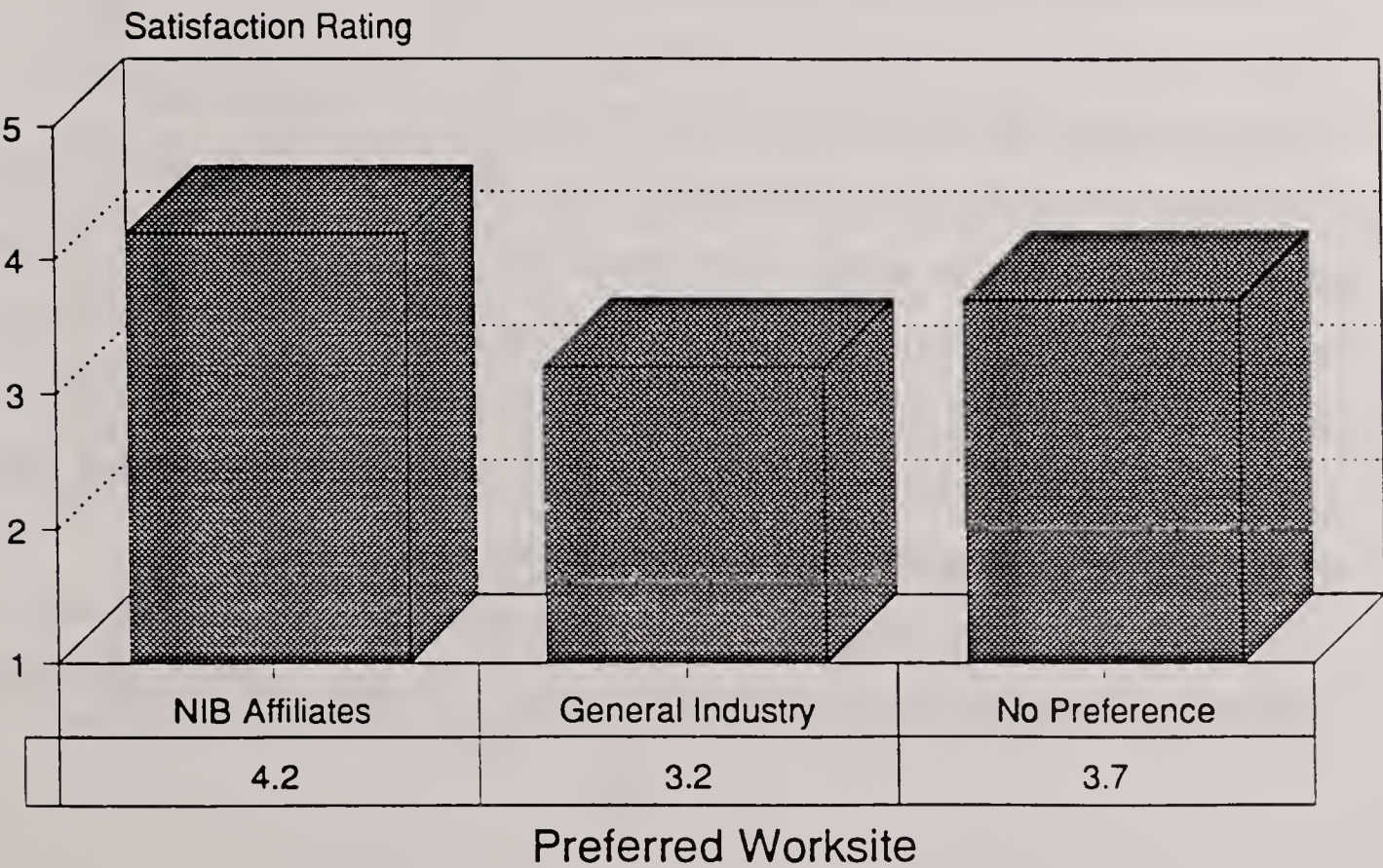


Figure 21

in the general sector (73%), almost half (46%) stated they were unable to find general employment because the employer was unwilling to hire a person who is blind.

When asked, "What is the single most important thing that is keeping blind people from working in the competitive labor market?", the majority of workers stated ignorance or discrimination on the part of employers and the general public. Some workers stated that it was their blindness itself that prevented them from working in the general labor market.

A small number of persons cited transportation as a barrier to general employment. Discussions with other persons who are blind after this survey was completed indicated that transportation continues to be such a pervasive issue in the life of every person with a visual disability that many would not even think to mention such an obvious issue unless it was specifically raised. Future researchers should note this when developing research questions in this area.

Preference for Facility-Based v. General Industry Employment

In regard to choice of a work place, workers were divided in their responses: 28% preferred their current placement, 36% preferred general industry, and 34% indicated no preference; a majority of workers who indicated no preference said that as long as they could do the work, were treated fairly, and earned a decent salary, they had no preference regarding their work environment. Workers indicating a preference for general industry stated that increased employment options, both for upward mobility and the variety of work available, were their main reasons.

Workers who chose to remain in their current placement indicated that they were comfortable at their job and had no desire

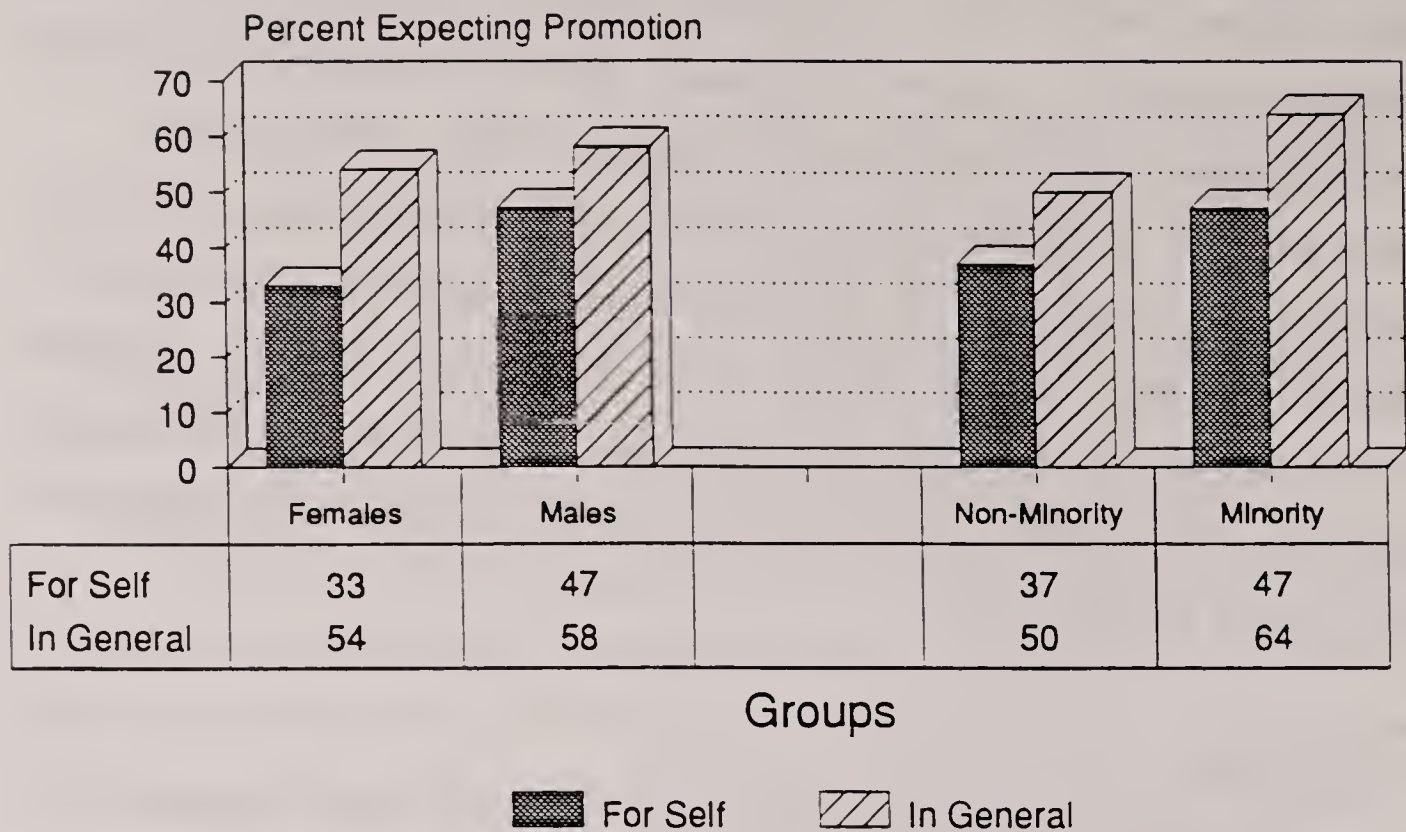
to change. Some preferred the low stress/pressure of the affiliate, while others stated they anticipated difficulty with mobility or transportation in a new environment. Workers who stated a preference for the NIB affiliate had higher levels of satisfaction than workers preferring general industry, or those with no preference. (Figure 21, p.29) Most workers had thought "a lot" (40%) or "a little" (27%), about the issue of choice regarding their workplace before the survey; 33% of the workers stated that they had not thought about where they would choose to work before the day of the survey.

Promotion

Workers were divided (51% yes, 36% no, 13% unsure) regarding whether there is a chance for "blind people in general" to be promoted. Those who thought there was a chance stated that co-workers within the affiliate had been promoted. Others stated that only a select group of persons were eligible for promotion; typically these select groups consisted of workers who were male and had a great deal of residual vision, or those who were reported to have a special relationship with management. There was no statistical difference, however, in the rate at which males and females, minorities and non-minorities, or those with varying levels of vision rated the likelihood of "blind people in general" being promoted. (Figures 22 and 23, p.32) Women who live alone, however, were more likely than men, or women who live with others, to believe that "blind people in general" could be promoted. (Figure 24, p.33)

Workers were also divided (34% yes, 49% no, 17% unsure) regarding whether one could individually be promoted. Some workers stated the possibility was there if they did a good job.

Promotion Expectation Higher for Minority and for Male Workers



No Male-Female Difference in Expectation "In General"

Figure 22

Promotion Expectations Not Influenced by Level of Vision

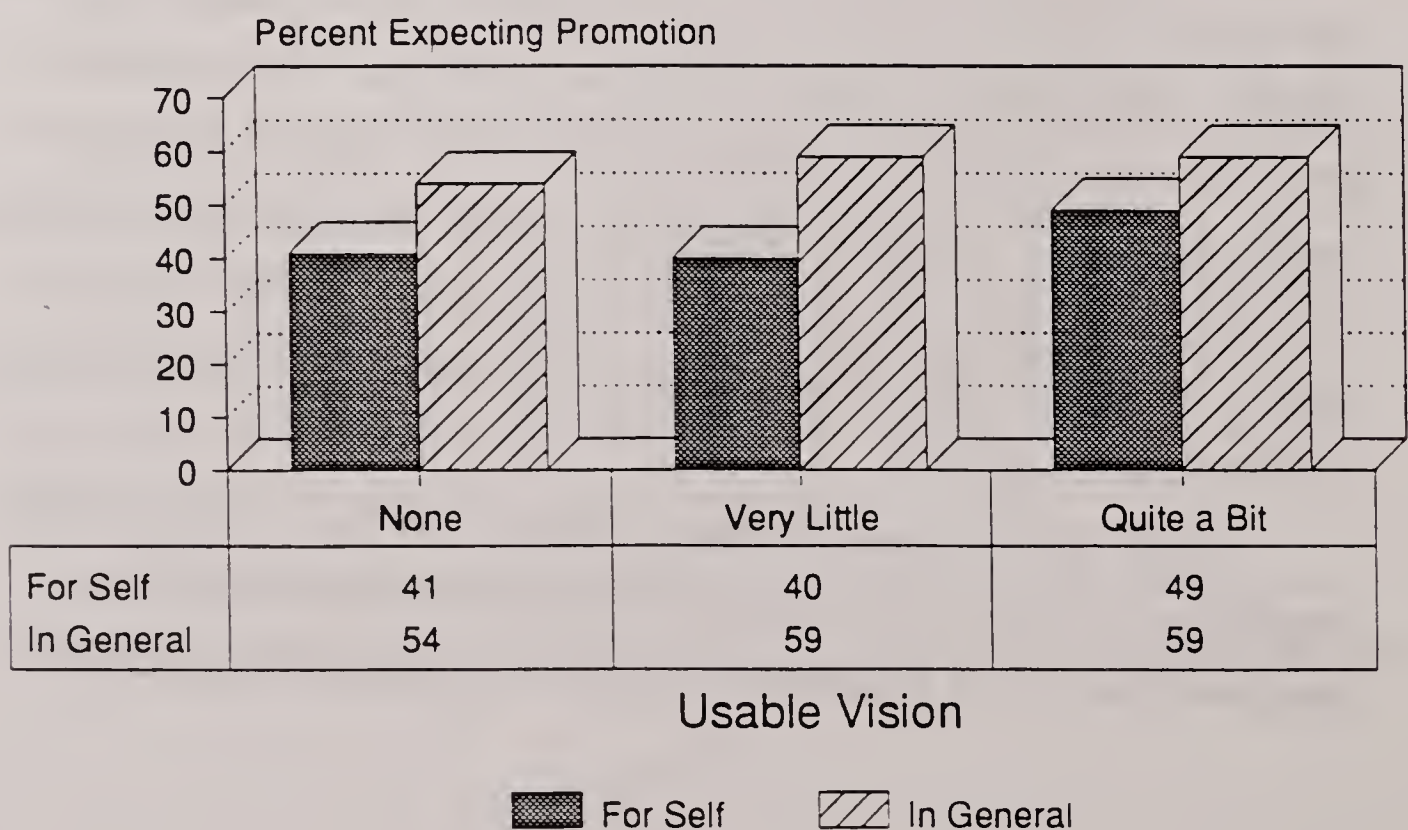
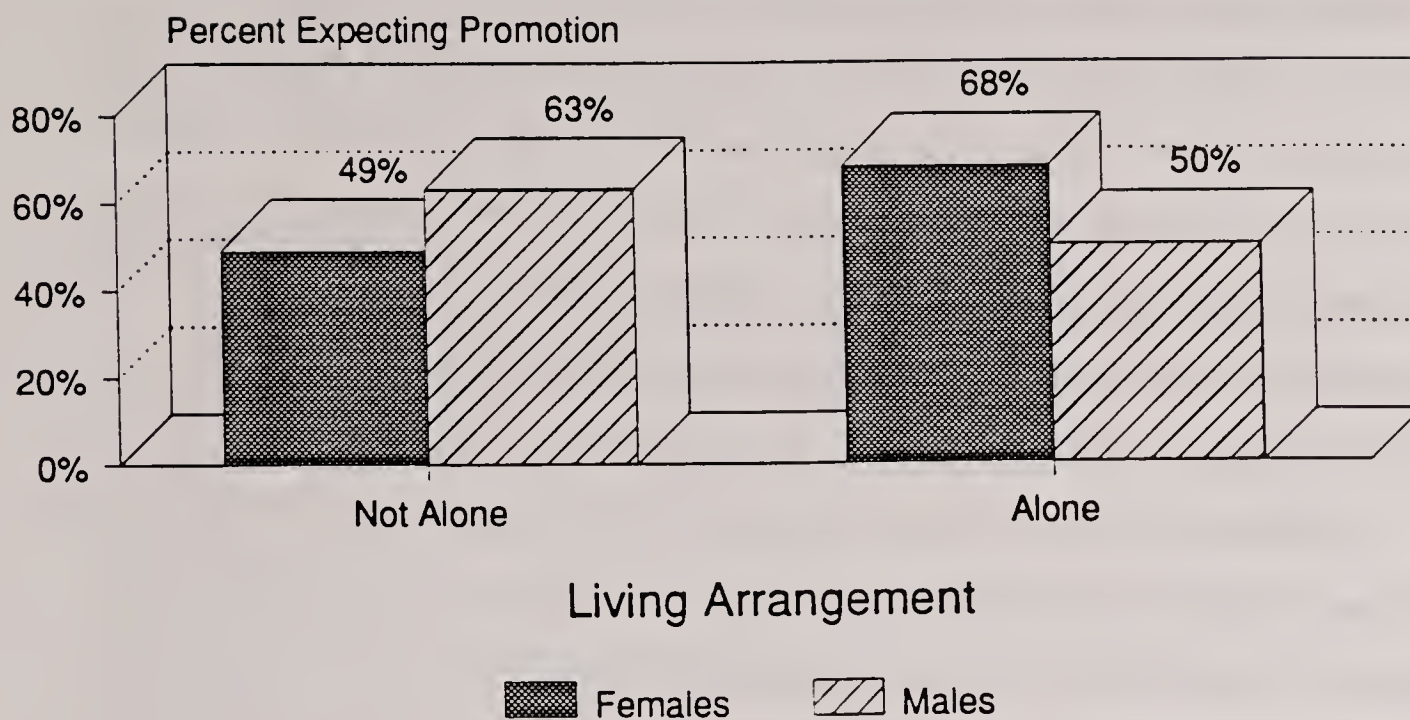


Figure 23

Living Alone and Gender Affect Promotion Expectation "In General" Only



No effects on satisfaction
or on promotion for "self"

Figure 24

Satisfaction Highest for Those that Expect a Chance for Promotion for Self and "In General"

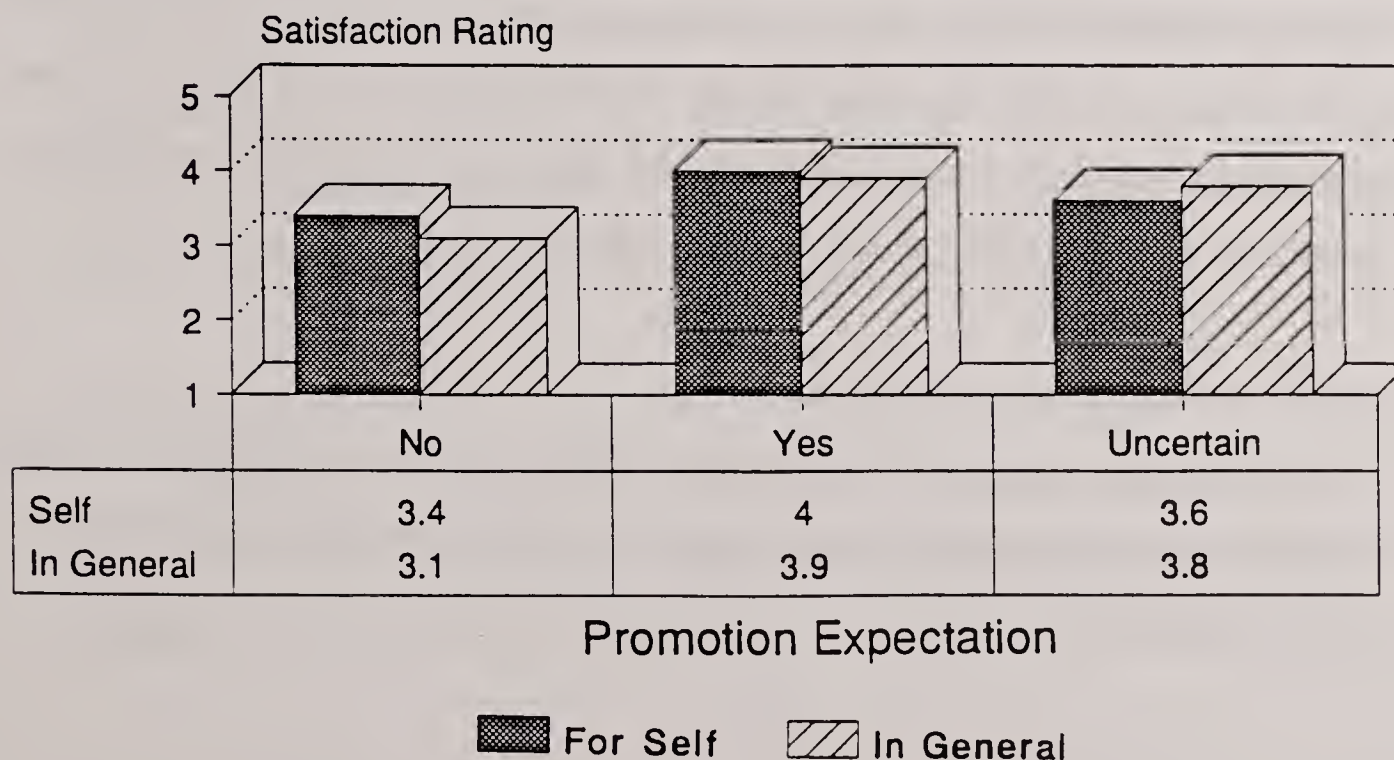


Figure 25

Others stated they would never be promoted because there was no position in which to promote them from their current position. Some workers stated that management would not promote them because they "don't play the game" or were "too outspoken." Workers with varying degrees of vision did not differ significantly in their assessments of their own ability to be promoted. (Figure 23, p.32) Women were less likely than men to believe they could be promoted. (Figure 22, p.32) Workers who believed there were chances for promotion were more satisfied than workers who thought there was no chance for promotion. (Figure 25, p.33)

Most workers (65%) stated that if a promotion was offered to them, they would accept it. Of these workers, many (26%) were unable to identify what particular job they could do if promoted. Almost one quarter (24%) of the workers stated they could perform higher direct labor duties. Although some workers stated that they could do any job at the affiliate, or any job offered them, most indicated they did not know what they could do, but felt other duties could be more challenging activities. This indicated a level of frustration among those workers with the nature of the tasks available to them; 21% of the workers did, however, state the type of work was a good point of the job. Of those persons stating that they would not accept a promotion (17%), reasons included too much pressure (25%), fear of losing unearned income (5%), lack of qualifications (6%), or satisfaction with present work (23%). The remainder of the group (18%) stated they were unsure regarding whether or not they would accept a promotion.

Other Employment Options

In response to the question, "Where do you think you would be working if you didn't work here?", approximately one-third of

the workers (29%) said they would not be working, and nearly as many said that they did not know (28%). A smaller number of persons (22%) said they would be employed in general industry, other facility-based work (10%), or self-employment (8%).

Consumer Groups

Of the three major consumer groups listed in the survey, the most frequently recognized (87%) was the National Federation of the Blind. The Blinded Veterans Association was the least commonly recognized (37%), with the American Council of the Blind in the middle (67%). Only a few additional groups were mentioned. There was no significant difference between satisfaction levels of those who were familiar with these organizations and those who were not. (Figure 26, p.36)

Most workers (78%) did not belong to any of the groups; however, the National Federation of the Blind had the largest membership with 14% of the workers claiming membership. The American Council of the Blind had only 8% membership among these workers and the Blinded Veterans Association claimed only 2 members. Members of these organizations had comparable satisfaction levels to non-members. A very small percentage of persons made comments about the groups, most either stating that all of the groups try to help people and are a positive influence, or that the groups are a negative influence and include people who just talk and fight amongst themselves.

Legislation

Over half (61%) of the direct labor workers interviewed stated they had not heard of either the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Act or the Fair Labor Standards Act. Of workers who had

Satisfaction Unaffected by Awareness or Membership in Consumer Organizations; Awareness or Knowledge of Legislation

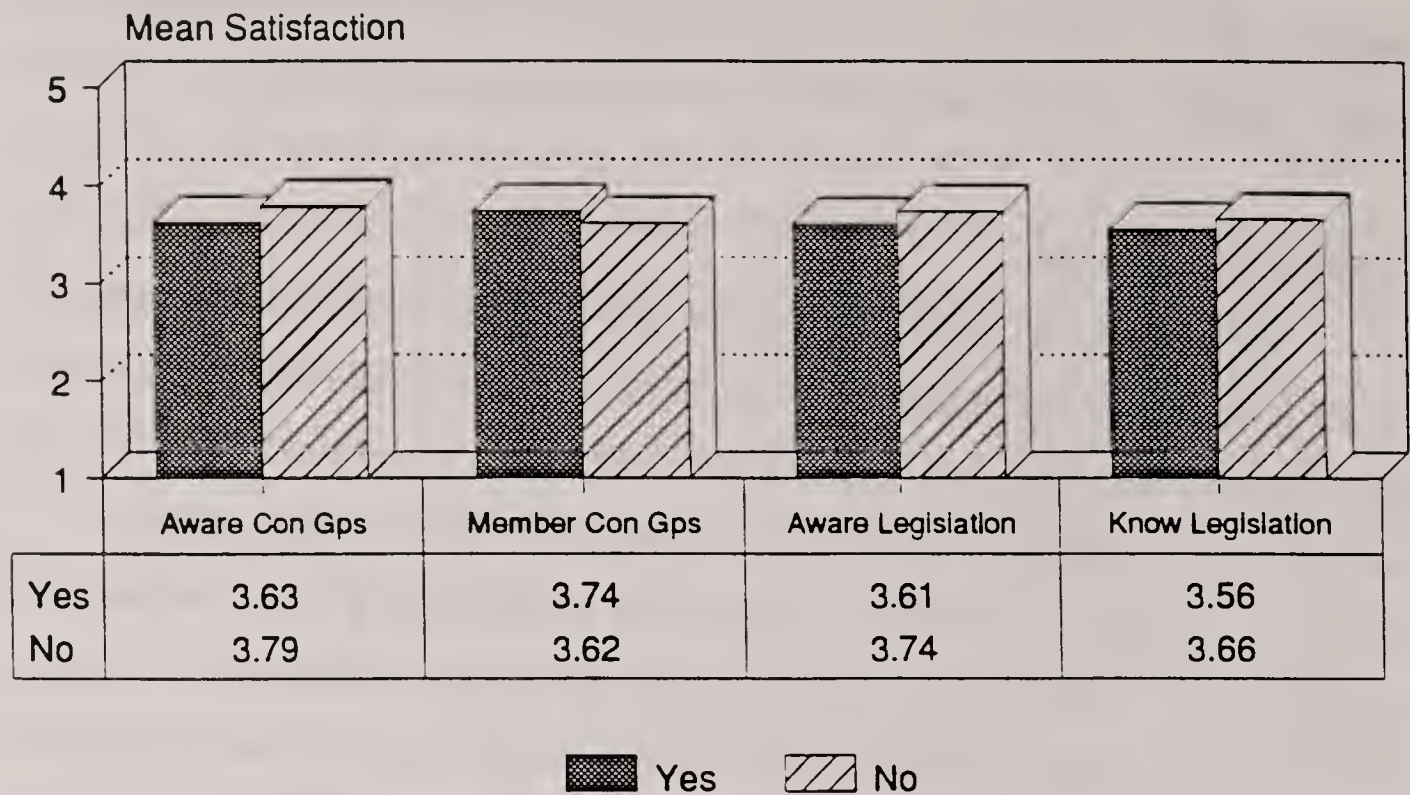
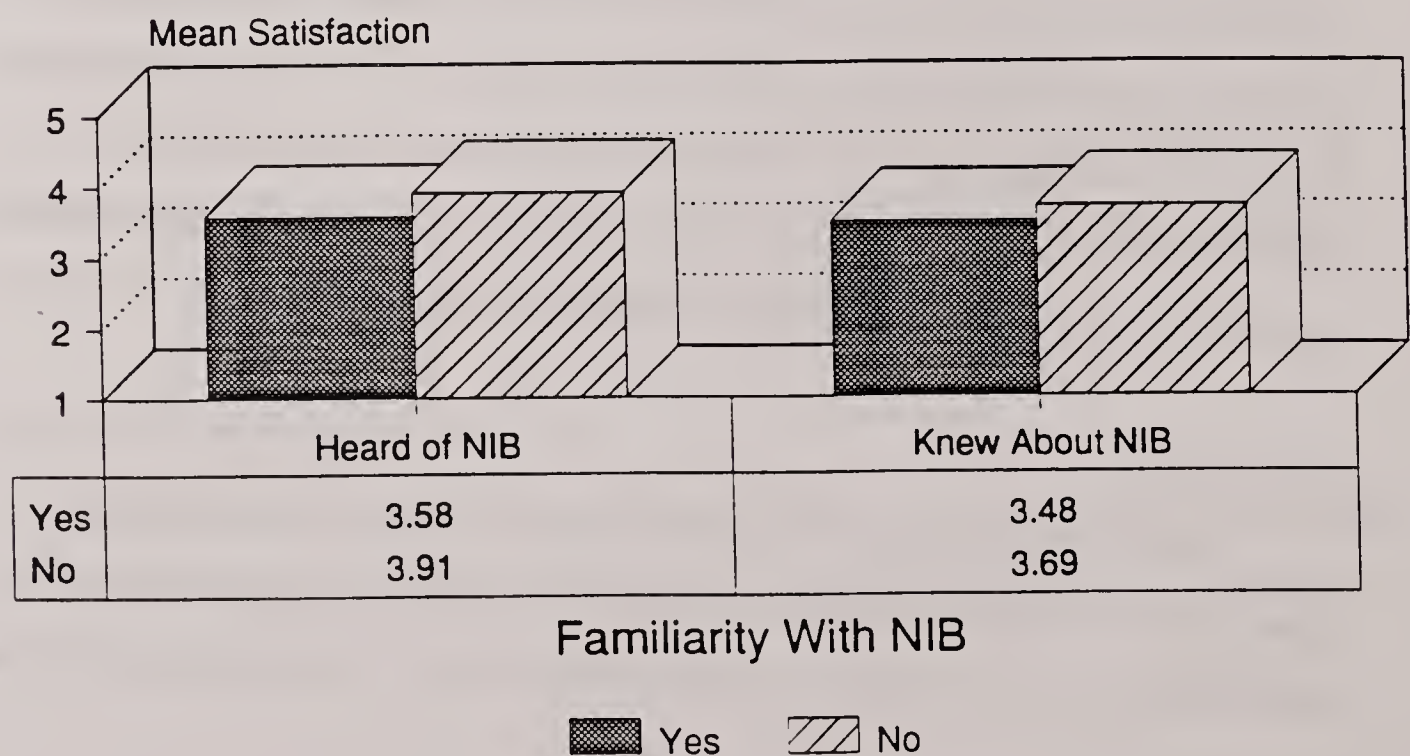


Figure 26

Satisfaction Higher for Workers Who Had Not Heard of NIB



No differences in satisfaction for workers who knew about NIB versus those who did not

Figure 27

heard of the JWOD, only 24% were able to explain it, and of workers who had heard of the Fair Labor Standards Act, less than one in ten (8%) were able to explain it. A greater number of direct labor workers (59%) stated they had heard of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Only 14% of direct labor workers thought that ADA had a positive effect on their lives, usually in the area of transportation, while less than 1% stated that ADA had a negative effect on their lives. Neither awareness nor knowledge of legislation had an effect on satisfaction levels.

The majority (82%) of direct labor workers had heard of NIB. Surprisingly, only 28% of those who had heard of NIB were able to relate any information about what NIB is. Some workers who were not able to relate any information about NIB reported that they had been named Worker of the Year and had attended NIB conventions. Workers who had heard of NIB were more dissatisfied than workers who had not; however, this difference did not occur among workers knowledgeable of NIB. (Figure 27, p.36)

Worker Comments

At the end of the survey, workers were given the opportunity to express questions or concerns to NIB management. Common themes were pleas to NIB to provide more work, requests that NIB take a greater role in affiliate management and administration, and remarks about affiliate staff. A large number of workers expressed appreciation to NIB for including them in the survey and for giving them an opportunity to express their opinions.

CONCLUSIONS

There is a clear mandate from the workers supporting the concept of specialized work for persons who are blind/visually impaired. Although workers recognize many problems within the affiliates, there appears to be widespread grass roots support for correcting these problems, rather than eliminating this employment option. Anxiety regarding the stability of employment appears to be a major concern and is likely negatively influencing worker satisfaction. Benefit packages, wages, and treatment by staff are also major concerns of direct-labor workers.

Workers repeatedly reported that the public, including general sector employers and their current affiliate employers, are unaware of the work capabilities of persons who are blind. Many workers stated their blindness itself was the "single most important thing" preventing their employment in the general sector, leading to the conclusion that some workers are likewise unaware of their own abilities. It is not surprising that the general public is unaware of the many ways jobs can be adapted, or that people who are blind can compete in a variety of occupations, when professionals in the field and people who are blind hold such views themselves. The need for widespread education in the field of adaptive technology and job modifications for professionals and workers appears clear.

Although broad patterns were revealed in this study, additional analysis is needed to determine more specific relationships among the variables. The wage disparity with levels of vision needs further investigation since the differences may be

attributed to other factors correlated with vision level, e.g., experience, age, education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following list of recommendations is suggested for consideration by National Industries for the Blind and the management of each affiliate. More specifically, it is recommended that NIB:

1. Adopt policies which insure that persons with less vision can compete fairly with more sighted workers for higher salaries and promotional opportunities.
2. Conduct sessions at various affiliates that focus on promoting cohesiveness among workers and staff, particularly directed toward reducing the perceived rivalry or division that is reported among workers who are visually impaired and those who are totally blind.
3. Encourage workers to remediate academic deficits by enrolling in high school equivalency degrees programs.
4. Assist affiliate staff in securing adaptive equipment that will enable workers with less vision to compete for more challenging jobs.
5. Encourage affiliate staff to visit other affiliates to learn about adapting jobs for persons who are the most severely visually impaired. When NIB staff visit local affiliates, visits should include private interviews with a few randomly selected direct labor workers. Such visits establish rapport with direct labor staff and give NIB staff insight into the daily activities and issues of each affiliate.

6. Assist affiliates in obtaining the necessary equipment for large print and tape correspondence so that each worker receives correspondence in their preferred medium, which is primarily large print or tape.
7. Develop mentoring programs so that Directors and Plant Managers who are successful can provide assistance and advice to other Directors and Managers who may be new, or are attempting to make major changes in management styles.
8. Provide training opportunities for affiliate board members to promote enhanced communication between management and direct labor workers.
9. Systematically compare differences, if any, in benefit packages available to management and direct labor workers. Assist affiliates in developing benefit packages for direct labor workers that are identical to benefits received by staff.
10. Insure that affiliate staff, particularly plant managers who do not have a background in the field of blindness, are provided training in facilitative skills/techniques and in issues related to blindness and vision loss.
11. Provide training to affiliate staff in areas that appear to be problematic, or have the potential of becoming problematic, i.e., gender-related issues, including sexual harassment; sensitivity to multi-cultural differences; information flow among labor, staff and management; technology and its impact on work abilities of persons who are blind; the Social Security Disability system and how benefit rates are determined.
12. Assist affiliate staff in their efforts to explain how piece rates are determined to direct labor staff; and

13. Enlist workers to serve as spokespersons for affiliates and NIB as to the profound benefits made available to them through their employment.

FUTURE RESEARCH ON COLLECTED DATA

Based on the results of this survey, the following issues appear in need of further study:

1. A comparative study of the issues of concern and satisfaction between workers in NIB affiliates and workers in light manufacturing industries in the general labor market;
2. A qualitative analysis of the open-ended responses (narrative data) to identify further concerns and trends among direct labor workers; and
3. Further statistical analysis of data collected to determine factors which contribute to wage discrepancies, such as age, education, etc.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION

The results of this study can be used to develop additional information regarding the following:

1. Identify vision levels of direct labor workers within affiliates to determine whether there is a hierarchy within the system which allows persons with more residual vision to obtain jobs of greater prestige and salary, as currently perceived by the workers.
2. An analysis of the number of direct labor workers who receive unearned income and the effect of this unearned

income on the number of hours worked and productivity level achieved.

3. An in-depth study of affiliates where there is widespread discontent among workers to determine underlying causes and provide assistance in developing corrective action plans.
4. A study of the transportation problems that exist, efforts made to remedy those problems, and efforts which have met with success or failure.
5. A study of the upward mobility strategies that are being utilized by direct labor workers to secure employment in the general labor market.
6. Evaluate the effect of general unemployment rates on job satisfaction, salary and part-time and full-time employment.
7. Survey affiliates to identify strategies for encouraging direct labor workers to take advantage of adult basic education programs; and
8. Contact persons recently separated from employment to collect demographic characteristics, vision levels, salient concerns, etc. for comparison of key factors to currently employed workers.

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904 %	n = 1,008 %	n = 502 %
GENDER:			
Male	59	55	63
Female	41	45	37
AGE:			
Under age 36*/31	37	22	12
36-50*/31-50	29	50	58
Over 50	<u>33</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>30</u>
51-60	--	16	18
60 and Over	--	12	12

*1983 Grouping

		1983	1987	1994
		n = 904	n = 1,008	n = 502
		%	%	%
RACE:		Not Reported		
White	61		59	
Black	32		37	
Asian	--		less than 1% (n=1)	
Native American	2		2	
Hispanic*/Hispanic Origin	4		5(n=23)	
No Answer	1		--	
Other	--		2	

*1987 Grouping

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904 %	n = 1,008 %	n = 502 %
HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS:			
Spouse	Not Reported	Not Reported	36
Children			32
Others			30
Lives Alone			69
DEPENDENTS:			
One (Self)	Not Reported	Not Reported	57
Two			23
Three			11
Four			5
Five or More			3

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904 %	n = 1,008 %	n = 502 %
MARITAL STATUS:			
Married	42	34	33
<u>Single</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>68</u>
Never Married	Not Reported	43	43
Separated	Not Reported	Not Reported	4
Divorced*	Not Reported	23*	16
Widowed*	Not Reported	--	5

*Combined

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904 %	n = 1,008 %	n = 502 %
HIGHEST GRADE OF SCHOOL COMPLETED			
None	5	6	1
Elementary School	27	23	15
Some High School	21	18	21
High School Graduate	33	36	45
Vocational School/College	13	16	18
No Answer	1	1	--
Diploma/High School Certificate	Not Reported	Not Reported	84/15
TYPE OF SCHOOL:			
Public School	Not Reported	Not Reported	56
School for the Blind			21
Combo-Public and School for the Blind			15
Private School			3
Other		--	5

		1983	1987	1994
		n = 904	n = 1,008	n = 502
		%	%	%
AGE AT ONSET OF BLINDNESS				
0-10*/0-5		61*	62	56
6-10		--	6	5
11-20		12	11	14
21-40		18	14	19
Over 40		9	7	6
READ BRAILLE				
No	Not Reported		Not Reported	59
Grade I				13
Grade II				28

*1983 Grouping

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904 %	n = 1,008 %	n = 502 %
PREFERRED READING METHOD			
Regular Print	Not Reported	Not Reported	7
Large Print			32
Tape Cassette/Talking Book			33
Computer Disk			2
Braille			16
Other			10
DESCRIPTION OF VISION			
No Usable Vision	Not Reported	Not Reported	29
Very Little Usable Vision			41
Quite a Bit of Usable Vision			30

		1983	1987	1994
		n = 904	n = 1,008	n = 502
		%	%	%
TRANSPORTATION TO WORK				
Taxi		4	5	--
Public Bus		41	36	30
Train/Subway		4	2	0
Walk		9	11	7
Carpool Passenger		29	20	8
Drive Self		--	--	1
Paratransit		--	14	27
Agency/Company/Van		4	6	7
Family Member		6	6	14
Other		4	--	5

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904 %	n = 1,008 %	n = 502 %
TIME TO GET TO WORK			
15 Minutes Or Less	39	36	36
16 to 30 Minutes	31	30	30
31 to 60 Minutes	21	23	30
Over One Hour	9	9	4
No Answer		2	n=8

			1983		1987		1994
			n = 904		n = 1,008		n = 502
			%		%		%
YEARS WORKING FOR PRESENT EMPLOYER							
Less Than 1 Year			6	8	2		
1 to 2 Yrs.*/1 to 5 Yrs.			16	37	28		
3 to 9 Yrs.*/6 to 10 Yrs.			42	21	25		
<u>Over 10 Years</u>			<u>36</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>50</u>		
10 to 19 Yrs.*/11 to 15 Yrs.			24	14	18		
16 to 19 Years			--	7	11		
Over 20 Years			12	11	16		
Don't Know			--	2	-		
HOURS PER WEEK WORKED							
Full-Time (more than 20 hrs/week)			92	91	98		
Part-Time (less than 20 hrs/week)			8	9	2		

*1983 Grouping

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904 %	n = 1,008 %	n = 502 %
DID YOU HAVE A JOB BEFORE BECOMING BLIND?			
No Job	71	80	69
IF YES, WHAT KIND OF JOB DID YOU HAVE?	(n=247)	(n=212)	(n=157)
Official/manager*	--	--	1
Professional*	--	--	5
Technician*	9*	13*	4
Office/Clerical	--	--	8
Craftworker/Skilled	5	--	15
Operative	17	15	14
Laborer, Unskilled	35	31	25
Service	20	24	28
Clerical/Sales	6	7	--
Farm Owner/Manager	5	--	--

* Combined

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904 %	n = 1,008 %	n = 502 %
WHY DID YOU LEAVE THAT JOB? (OF THOSE WHO HAD A JOB)	(n=247)	(n=205)	(n=154)
Fired/Laid Off Due To Blindness	69	66	61
Other Health/Medical	6	8	--
Fired/Laid Off Due To Other Disability	--	--	4
Plant Closed/Work Force Reduction	5	8	8
Part-Time/Seasonal	3	--	5
Family/Personal Reasons	3	9	11
Obtain Higher Wages	--	--	3
Conflict With Supervisor/Co-Worker	--	--	2
Other	6	1	6
Not Enough Income/Advancement Opportunities	3	1	--

	1983	1987	1994
	1983 n = 904 %	1987 n = 1,008 %	1994 n = 502 %
DID YOU HAVE A JOB <u>AFTER</u> BECOMING BLIND?			
Yes	42 (n=382)	40 (n=421)	64 (n=323)
IF YES, WHY DID YOU LEAVE THAT JOB?			
Fired/Laid Off Due To Blindness	20	17	17
Fired/Laid Off Due To Other Disability	9	3	2
Plant Closed/Work Force Reduction	14	21	18
Part-Time/Seasonal	9	--	15
Family/Personal Reasons/Moved	7	16	17
Obtain Higher Wages	--	--	7
Conflict With Supervisor/Co-Worker	3	4	6
No Answer	3	--	less than 1%
Other	12	2	16
Laid Off/Terminated	10	4	--
Not Enough Income/Advancement Opportunities	8	16	--
Work Was Too Hard/Not Qualified	5	4	--

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904 %	n = 1,008 %	n = 502 %
SINCE BECOMING BLIND, HAVE YOU EVER WORKED IN ANOTHER WORKSHOP?			
Yes			24
No	1	Not Reported	76
(If Yes), A Workshop For The Blind?			57
A Generic Workshop			38
WHAT ARE SOME OF THE EMPLOYEE BENEFITS YOU GET BECAUSE YOU WORK HERE?			
No Answer	Not Reported	8	--
Yes (Knows Some Benefits)	83	82	70
No (Does Not Know Benefits)	17	10	30

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904 %	n = 1,008 %	n = 502 %
HOW WERE YOUR BENEFITS EXPLAINED TO YOU?			
Verbal Explanation From Staff	65 (Among Those Who Claim To Know)	82	59
Employee Manual	28 (Written Explanation)	33	21
Union Contract	--	1	--
Co-Workers	--	--	1
Cannot Identify Source	--	--	7
Not Explained	--	--	6
Other	4	4	5
No Answer	3	4	--

		1983	1987	1994
		n = 904	n = 1,008	n = 502
		%	%	%
BEFORE YOU CAME TO WORK HERE, DID YOU RECEIVE ANY TRAINING SERVICES SUCH AS MOBILITY, DAILY LIVING OR COMMUNICATION?				
Yes	Not Reported		67	63
No			31	37
No Answer			2	--
(If Yes), Where?				
This Agency		41	40	22
Another Agency		21	55	70
Both		--	--	8
No Answer		--	5	--

	1983	1987	1994
	1983 n = 904 %	1987 n = 1,008 %	1994 n = 502 %
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN SERVED BY A STATE REHABILITATION AGENCY OR "HAD A COUNSELOR WITH THE STATE?"			
Yes	Not Reported	Not Reported	88
No			11
Not Sure			1
HOW MUCH ARE YOU CURRENTLY PAID?			
Weekly Average	Not Reported	Not Reported	\$191.04
Per Hour Average			\$5.36
WHO TAUGHT YOU HOW TO DO YOUR PRESENT JOB?			
Trainer	Not Reported	17	18
Supervisor		64	47
Co-Worker		9	17
No One		12	15
Other		1	2

		1983	1987	1994
		1983 n = 904 %	1987 n = 1,008 %	1994 n = 502 %
HOW DID YOU GET THIS JOB? On My Own Referral By VR Counselor Referral By ESC/Job Services Referred By RSB Referred By Family Other		Not Reported	Not Reported	24
				52
				1
				5
				6
				13
HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WORKING HERE? Very Satisfied (Very Positive) Satisfied (Positive) Neutral Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied No Response				21
		24	23	40
		49	43	25
		21	23	10
		4	6	4
		2	4	0
		--	1	

	1983	1987	1994
	1983 n = 904 %	1987 n = 1,008 %	1994 n = 502 %
WHAT ARE THE GOOD POINTS OF WORKING HERE?			
Wages	5	19	17
Fringe Benefits	8	18	21
Independence/Self Sufficiency	19	44	12
Co-Workers	10	46	43
Staff/Management	9	24	30
Reduced/Minimal Job Pressure	5	10	13
Working With Other Blind/Disabled People	3	22	15
Type of Work	9	24	21
Physical Working Conditions		--	9
Stable Employment	4	--	27
Other	17	--	31
None	1	--	1

		1983	1987	1994
		n = 904	n = 1,008	n = 502
		%	%	%
WHAT IS THE <u>MAIN</u> GOOD POINT OF WORKING HERE?		Not Reported		
Wages			7	9
Fringe Benefits			10	5
Independence/Self Sufficiency			26	6
Co-Workers			13	8
Staff/Management			7	6
Reduced/Minimal Job Pressure			4	2
Working With Other Blind/Disabled People			9	4
Type of Work			11	7
Physical Working Conditions			--	2
Stable Employment			2	26
Other			1	15
None			--	10

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904 %	n = 1,008 %	n = 502 %
WHAT ARE THE BAD POINTS OF WORKING HERE?			
(Poor) Wages	11	21	20
(Insufficient) Fringe Benefits	3	--	8
(Lack Of) Independence/Self Sufficiency	--	--	1
Co-Workers	4	7	9
Staff/Management	5	19	25
Job Pressure	--	--	4
Working With Other Blind/Disabled People	--	--	1
Type of Work	--	10	6
Physical Working Conditions	3	8	12
(Lack Of) Stable Employment/ Steady Job	7	17	8
Other	16	--	27
None	38	27	30
Poor Atmosphere/Favoritism	2	--	--
No Opportunity For Advancement	3	18	--
No Seniority	1	--	--

		1983	1987	1994
		1983 n = 904 %	1987 n = 1,008 %	1994 n = 502 %
WHAT IS THE <u>MAIN</u> BAD POINT OF WORKING HERE?		Not Reported		
(Poor) Wages		--	15	11
(Insufficient) Fringe Benefits		--	--	2
Co-Workers		--	--	4
Staff/Management		--	11	14
Job Pressure		--	--	1
Type of Work		--	6	3
Physical Working Conditions		--	4	5
(Lack Of) Stable Employment/ Steady Job		--	12	4
Other		--	--	14
None		--	27	41
No Opportunity For Advancement		--	9	--

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904 %	n = 1,008 %	n = 502 %
DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE BEEN DISCRIMINATED AGAINST, BECAUSE OF YOUR BLINDNESS, IN GETTING HIRED OR KEEPING A JOB?			
Yes	Not Reported	Not Reported	37
No			60
Not Sure			3

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904	n = 1,008	n = 502
	%	%	%
SINCE WORKING HERE, HAVE YOU TRIED TO GET A JOB IN PRIVATE INDUSTRY?			
Yes	24 (n=218)	25 (n=255)	26 (n=126)
No	76	74	74
No Answer/Not Sure	--	1	--
(If Yes), Did You Get A Job In Private Industry?			
Yes	5	20	27 (n=36)
No	95	80	73
What Happened To That Job?	Not Reported		
Fired		--	22
Laid Off		8	15
Quit		12	25
Other		--	38

	1983	1987	1994
	1983 n = 904 %	1987 n = 1,008 %	1994 n = 502 %
WHY WERE YOU FIRED, LAID OFF, OR QUIT?			
Blindness	Not Reported	Not Reported	8
Lack Of Work			18
No Advancement			2
Wages/Benefits			13
Attitudes Of Co-Workers			18
Preferred Shop			5
Working Conditions			2
Loss Of Disability Income			5
Other			28

		1983	1987	1994
		n = 904	n = 1,008	n = 502
		%	%	%
(IF NO), WHY DIDN'T YOU GET A JOB IN PRIVATE INDUSTRY?		(n=207)	(n=204)	(n=106)
Industry Won't Hire Blind People		24	35	46
Transportation		--	4	5
No Job Available		22	12	5
No Response To Inquiry/Application		17	7	13
Not Qualified/Not Competitive		3	12	5
Didn't Like Working Conditions		--	1	4
Failure Due To Counselor/State Agency		--	6	2
Wages/Benefits Not Attractive		5	2	--
Other/Age		5	2	21
No Answer		14	4	

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904 %	n = 1,008 %	n = 502 %
WHY HAVEN'T YOU TRIED?	(n=684)	(n=743)	(n=413)
Prefer Shop	27	38	27
Industry Won't Hire Blind People	9	17	11
Age*		8	6
Other Disability*	6*	6	1
SSI/SSDI		3	2
Lack Of Education/Skill/Experience*	*5	9	4
Not Able To Perform At Competitive Level*	--	9	3
No Jobs Available	6	6	5
Transportation	--	3	4
Other	24	--	36

*Combined

		1983	1987	1994
		n = 904	n = 1,008	n = 502
		%	%	%
IF YOU HAD TO CHOOSE, WHERE WOULD YOU PREFER TO WORK?				
Here		57	55	28
Private Industry		35	39	36
No Preference		--	--	34
No Answer		8	6	1
Before Today, Have You Thought About That Question A Lot, A Little, Or Not At All?				
A Lot		--	--	40
A Little		--	--	27
Not At All		--	--	33

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904 %	n = 1,008 %	n = 502 %
DO YOU THINK THERE IS A CHANCE FOR BLIND PEOPLE IN GENERAL, TO BE PROMOTED HERE?			
Yes		51	51
No		27	36
Not Sure		20	12
No Answer		2	--
DO YOU THINK THERE IS A CHANCE FOR <u>YOU TO BE PROMOTED HERE?</u>		Not Reported	
Yes	22		34
No	47		49
Not Sure	31		17
WOULD YOU ACCEPT A PROMOTION IF IT WERE OFFERED?			
Yes		80	65
No		15	17
Not Sure		5	18

		1983	1987	1994
		n = 904	n = 1,008	n = 502
		%	%	%
WOULD YOU ACCEPT A PROMOTION IF IT WERE OFFERED?				
(If No) Why Wouldn't You Accept a Promotion?				
Like Present Work			34	23
Too Much Pressure			32	25
SSI/SSDI/Loss			7	5
Not Qualified			14	6
Age			10	--
Looking For Another Career			4	--
Other			--	41

	1983	1987	1994
	1983 n = 904 %	1987 n = 1,008 %	1994 n = 502 %
(IF YES), WHAT TYPE OF JOB DO YOU THINK YOU COULD DO IF YOU WERE PROMOTED?			
Higher Direct Labor	4	26	24
Floor Worker	14	--	2
Supervisor	16	21	13
Manager		4	2
Office/Clerical	--	10	9
Instructor/Trainer	--	19	5
Counselor/Other Professional	--	7	3
Janitor	--	--	1
Unsure	5	10	26
Other/Anything	15	--	15
Higher Unskilled/Indirect Labor		14	--
No Answer	14	1	--
Assistant Supervisor	17	--	--
Line Leader	13	--	--

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904	n = 1,008	n = 502
	%	%	%
WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU WOULD BE WORKING IF YOU DIDN'T WORK HERE?			
Private Industry*	*18	16	22
Another Shop	4	10	10
Self-Employment*	--	8	8
Not Working	37	31	29
Don't Know	32	34	28
Other	--	--	3
No Answer	1	1	--

*Combination

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904 %	n = 1,008 %	n = 502 %
HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE FOLLOWING GROUPS OF BLIND PEOPLE?			
American Council of the Blind: Yes	56	22	67
Blinded Veterans Association: Yes		5	37
National Federation of the Blind: Yes	75	33	87
Other Organizations: Yes		11	9
Are You a Member of Any Group? Yes		--	22

		1983	1987	1994
		n = 904	n = 1,008	n = 502
		%	%	%
OF WHICH GROUPS ARE YOU A MEMBER?				
American Council of the Blind		4	7	8
Blinded Veterans Association		--	1	0
National Federation of the Blind		4	13	14
Other		--	7	2

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904 %	n = 1,008 %	n = 502 %
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE JAVITS- WAGNER-O'DAY ACT?			
Yes	10	27	39
No	87	71	61
No Answer	3	2	--
Among those who had heard of the Javits- Wagner-O'Day Act, those who could state what it is:	Not Reported		
Yes, Could Explain		26	24
No, Could Not Explain		54	76
No Answer		20	--

		1983	1987	1994
		n = 904 %	n = 1,008 %	n = 502 %
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT?				
Yes	(If Yes), tell what you know about the Fair Labor Standards Act.	Not Reported	Not Reported	39
No				61
Yes (Could Explain)				8
No (Could Not Explain)			92	

	1983	1987	1994
	1983 n = 904 %	1987 n = 1,008 %	1994 n = 502 %
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT?			
Yes			
(If Yes), Has ADA Had An Effect On Your Life?			
Yes	Not Reported	Not Reported	59
(If Yes), In Which Areas Of Your Life Has ADA Had An Effect?			14
POSITIVE:			
Employment			25
Social Life/Recreation			9
Peoples Attitudes Toward Blindness			2
Transportation			41
Other			23
Negative			None

	1983	1987	1994
	n = 904	n = 1,008	n = 502
	%	%	%
PRIOR TO MY INTERVIEWING YOU TODAY, HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE NATIONAL INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND?			
Yes	71	73	82
No	--	23	18
No Answer/Don't Know	--	4	--
(If Yes), tell me what you know about National Industries For the Blind	Not Reported		
Yes (Could Explain)		38	28
No (Could Not Explain)		38	72
No Answer		9	--

	1983	1987	1994
	1983 n = 904 %	1987 n = 1,008 %	1994 n = 502 %
DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER MAJOR HEALTH OR PHYSICAL PROBLEMS BESIDES BLINDNESS?			
Yes	Not Reported	Not Reported	45
Answered By Interviewer:			
Did This Respondent Seem To Have Any Significant Disabilities In Addition To Blindness?			
Yes		32	19
(If Yes), What Type?			
Physical		6	7
Sensory		5	3
Mental/Emotional		9	2
Learning (Including Retardation)		17	9
Other		2	--

			1983		1987		1994
			n = 904		n = 1,008		n = 502
			%		%		%
HOW DIFFICULT WOULD YOU SAY IT WAS TO COMMUNICATE WITH THIS PERSON?							
Extremely Difficult					3		1
Very Difficult					3		3
Somewhat Difficult					11		2
Slightly Difficult					14		9
Not At All Difficult					64		85
No Answer					5		--

NATIONAL INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND
DIRECT LABOR WORKER SURVEY
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Mr./Ms. _____, my name is _____;

I am with the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision at Mississippi State University. We have a contract with National Industries for the Blind (NIB) to conduct a survey of Direct Labor workers who are blind and employed by NIB Affiliated Industries for the Blind. This project is being supported by National Industries for the Blind so that they can improve job opportunities for their direct labor blind workers. This interview is strictly voluntary on your part; your name was randomly selected from a list. If you agree to take part in this survey, no data will be tabulated by agency nor will specific interview results be given to the individual agencies regarding their employee responses. You may stop the interview at any time and again, all of your responses will be held in strict confidence. Your name will not be used in the final report and all responses will be averaged together for the reports. This will take about 40 minutes; would you like to go ahead with the interview?

(If Yes proceed, if No, answer questions as appropriate)

**NIB Direct Labor Blind Worker
Questionnaire**

Date: _____

Agency # _____

Start Time: _____

1. ID Number

1. _____

2. Gender

Male (1)

Female (0)

2. _____

Start Interview Here

3. How old are you?

3. _____

4. Do you consider yourself to be: **(READ)**

White (1)

Black (2)

Asian (3)

American Indian (4)

Other (5) _____

4. _____

5. Are you of Hispanic origin?

Yes (1)

No (0)

5. _____

6. Who lives in your household? **(READ)**

a. Spouse

Yes (1)

No (0)

6(a). _____

b. Children

Yes (1)

No (0)

6(b). _____

c. Other _____

Yes (1)

No (0)

6(c). _____

7. How many dependents do you have who are supported
mainly by your income? (include yourself in the count)

7. _____

8. What is your marital status? 8. _____

Never married (1)

Married (2)

Separated (3)

Divorced (4)

Widowed (5)

9. What is the highest grade of school you actually completed? (e.g., 1 year of college equals 13, etc.)

a. _____ 9(a). _____

b. _____ (Other: Did you receive a certificate (1) or diploma (0) for high school?) 9(b). _____

10. Did you attend: (READ) 10. _____

A Regular Public school (1)

A School for the Blind (2)

A Private school (3)

Both regular school and a School for the Blind (4)

Other (5) (explain) _____

11. How old were you when you became legally blind or were you born blind? (*Indicate age in years or enter 00 if born blind*) 11. _____
(*If born blind, omit question 19*)

12. Do you read Grade I or Grade II braille or do you not read braille? 12. _____

No, I don't read braille (0) or

Yes, I read Grade I (1) or

Yes, I read Grade II (2)

13. How do you prefer to read? (READ) 13. _____

- Regular print (1)
- Large print (2)
- Tape cassette/Talking book (3)
- Computer disk (4)
- Braille (5)
- Other (6) _____

14. How would you describe your vision? (READ) 14. _____

- No usable vision (1), or
- Very little usable vision (2), or
- Quite a bit of usable vision (3)

15. How do you get to work? (primary means) 15. _____

- Public bus (1)
- Train/subway (2)
- Walk (3)
- Passenger in a car pool (4)
- Drive self (5)
- Paratransit (6) (name of agency) _____
- Agency/company van (7)
- Driven by family member (8)
- Other (9) _____

16. About how long does it take you to get to work? 16. _____
(# of minutes) _____

Now I'm going to ask you a few questions about your job.

17. About how long have you been working for your 17. _____
present employer? (# of years) _____

18. a. How many hours per week do you usually work? 18(a). _____

(If less than 20 hours per week):

b. Why do you work only part time? Are there any other reasons?

If item is mentioned, code "1"; if not mentioned, code "0"

Age/retired	_____
Medical reason	_____
Other income - SSI or SSDI	_____
Family responsibility	_____
Transportation difficulties	_____
Not enough work	_____
This is second job	_____
Personal choice	_____
No explanation	_____
Other reason _____	_____

19. What kind of job or jobs, if any, did you have before becoming blind?
(disregard if born blind)

Specific Job Title(s) _____

Code "1" for category(ies) of above job(s); [if No Job, skip to q. 21]

No job	_____
Official/Manager	_____
Professional	_____
Technician	_____
Office/Clerical	_____
Craftworker/Skilled	_____
Operative	_____
Laborer	_____
Service	_____
Other _____	_____

20. Why did you leave the job you had before becoming blind? Any other reason?

If item is mentioned, code "1"; if not mentioned, code "0".

Fired/laid off due to blindness
Fired/laid off due to other disability
Plant closed/work force reduction
Part time/seasonal
Family/personal reasons
Obtain higher wages
Conflict with supervisor/co-worker
No answer
Other _____

21. What kind of job, if any, did you have after becoming blind other than a workshop? (*if none, go to q. 23*)

22. Why did you leave that job? Are there any other reasons?

If item is mentioned, code "1"; if not mentioned, code "0".

Fired/laid off due to blindness
Fired/laid off due to other disability
Plant closed/work force reduction
Part time/seasonal
Family/personal reasons
Obtain higher wages
Conflict with supervisor/co-worker
No answer
Other _____

23.a. Since becoming blind, have you ever worked in another workshop? 23(a). _____

(1) Yes _____ (0) No _____ (*go to q. 24*)

b. [If yes] a Workshop for the Blind (1) or a 23(b). _____
Generic workshop (e.g., Goodwill, Easter Seal) (2)

How much were you paid (gross pay): (*get both if possible*)

c. \$ per week _____ 23(c). _____

d. \$ per hour _____ 23(d). _____

24. What are some of the employee benefits you get because you work here? 24. ____
(medical insurance, life insurance, vacation, etc.)

Yes (1) (know benefits)

No (0) (go to q. 26) (do not know benefits)

25. How were your benefits explained to you? 25. ____

Verbal explanation from staff (1)

Employee manual (2)

Co-workers (3)

Family (4)

Cannot identify source (5)

Not explained (6)

Other (7)

26. Before you came to work here, did you receive any training services such as mobility (getting around), daily living or communication (for example, using tapes for reading)?

a. (1) Yes ____ (0) No ____ (go to q. 27a) 26(a). ____

b. [If Yes], Where did you receive these services? 26(b). ____

This agency (1)

Another agency (2)

Both(3)

27. a. Have you ever been served by a state rehabilitation agency or 27. ____
"had a Counselor with the State"?

(1) Yes ____ (0) No ____ (go to q. 28) (2) Not Sure ____ (go to q. 28)

b. [If Yes], what types of services did you receive?

28. What is your current job title? 28. ____

29. How much are you currently paid (gross pay)? (*get both if possible*)

a. \$ _____ per week

29(a). _____

b. \$ _____ per hour

29(b). _____

30. Who taught you how to do your present job? (*explain terms*)

30. _____

Trainer (1)

Supervisor (2)

Co-worker (3)

No one (4)

Other (5) (specify) _____

31. How did you get this job?

31. _____

Got job on my own (1)

Referral by VR Counselor (2)

Referred by ESC/Job Services (3)

Referred by RSB (4)

Referred by Family (5)

Other (6) (specify) _____

Attitudes and Perceptions

32. How satisfied are you working here? (**READ LIST**)

32. _____

Very satisfied (5)

Satisfied (4)

Neutral (3)

Dissatisfied (2)

Very dissatisfied (1)

No response (**DO NOT READ**) (0)

(Record Comments)

If item is mentioned, code "1"; if not mentioned, code "0".

33a. What are the good points of working here? (anything else)?

Wages _____
Fringe benefits _____
Independence/self-sufficiency _____
Co-workers _____
Staff/management _____
Reduced/minimal job pressure _____
Working with other blind/disabled people _____
Type of work _____
Physical working conditions _____
Stable employment/steady job _____
Other _____
None _____ (*Go to q. 33c*)

33b. What is the main good point of working here? (*check only one*) _____

- (1) Wages
 - (2) Fringe benefits
 - (3) Independence/self-sufficiency
 - (4) Co-workers
 - (5) Staff/management
 - (6) Reduced/minimal job pressure
 - (7) Working with other blind/disabled people
 - (8) Type of work
 - (9) Physical working conditions
 - (10) Stable employment/steady job
 - (11) Other _____
 - (12) None _____ (*Go to q. 33c*)
- _____
- _____

If item is mentioned, code "1"; if not mentioned, code "0".

33c. What are the bad points of working here? (anything else)?

Wages _____

Fringe benefits _____

Independence/self-sufficiency _____

Co-workers _____

Staff/management _____

Reduced/minimal job pressure _____

Working with other blind/disabled people _____

Type of work _____

Physical working conditions _____

Stable employment/steady job _____

Other _____ _____

None _____

33(d). What is the main bad point of working here? (*check only one*)

- (1) Wages
 - (2) Fringe benefits
 - (3) Independence/self-sufficiency
 - (4) Co-workers
 - (5) Staff/management
 - (6) Reduced/minimal job pressure
 - (7) Working with other blind/disabled people
 - (8) Type of work
 - (9) Physical working conditions
 - (10) Stable employment/steady job
 - (11) Other
 - (12) None _____
- _____
- _____

34. Do you feel you've been discriminated against, because of your blindness, in getting hired or keeping a job?

(1) Yes ____ (0) No ____ (go to q. 35a) Not Sure (2) (go to q. 35a)

b. [If Yes], what were the circumstances? _____

35. a. Since working here, have you tried to get a job in private industry? 35(a). ____

(1) Yes ____ (0) No ____ (go to q. 36b)

b. [If Yes], Did you get a job in private industry? 35(b). ____

(1) Yes ____ (0) No ____ (go to q. 36a)

c. What happened to that job? 35(c). ____

- Fired (1)
- Laid off (2)
- Quit (3)
- Other (4)

d. Why were you fired, laid off or quit? (DON'T READ) 35(d). ____
Is there anything else?

If item is mentioned, code "1"; if not mentioned, code "0".

- Blindness ____
- Other disability ____
- Lack of work ____
- Type of work ____
- No advancement ____
- Wages/benefits ____
- Attitudes of co-workers/Management ____
- Transportation ____
- Preferred shop ____
- Working conditions ____
- Loss of disability income ____
- Other (specify) _____

36. a. Why didn't you get a job in private industry? (DON'T READ)
Anything else?

If item is mentioned, code "1"; if not mentioned, code "0".

- Industry won't hire blind people _____
 - No job I liked _____
 - Transportation _____
 - No job available _____
 - No response to inquiry/application _____
 - I was not qualified/not competitive _____
 - Didn't like working conditions _____
 - Failure due to counselor/state agency _____
 - Wages/benefits not attractive _____
 - Other _____
-
-

Go to question 37

b. Why haven't you tried? (DON'T READ) Anything else?

If item is mentioned, code "1"; if not mentioned, code "0".

- Prefer shop _____
 - Industry won't hire blind people _____
 - Age _____
 - Other Disability _____
 - SSI/SSDI _____
 - Lack of education/skill/experience _____
 - No jobs available _____
 - Transportation _____
 - Not able to perform at competitive level _____
 - Other _____
-
-

37. In your opinion, what is the single most important thing that is keeping blind people from working in the competitive labor market?

38. a. If you had to choose where to work, where would you prefer to work? (READ) 38(a). _____

Here, or (1)
Private industry, or (2)
No preference, or (3)
No Answer, or (0) (*DON'T READ*)

b. Why is that/why do you feel that way? _____

- c. Before today, have you thought about that question a lot, a little, or not at all? (DON'T READ) 38(c). _____

A lot (1)
A little (2)
Not at all (3)

39. a. Do you think there is a chance for blind people in general, to be promoted here? 39(a). _____

(DON'T READ) (1) Yes _____ (0) No _____ (2) Not Sure _____

b. Why do you think that? _____

40. Do you think there is a chance for you to be promoted here? 40. _____

Yes (1)
No (0)
Not sure (2)
Why do you think that? _____

41. Would you accept a promotion if it were offered? 41(a). _____

Yes (1) (go to b and skip c)
No (0) (Skip b and go to c)
Not Sure (2) (skip to q. 42)

b. [If Yes], What type of job do you think you could do if promoted? (DON'T READ) 41(b). _____

Higher direct labor (1)
Floor worker (2)
Supervisor (3)
Manager (4)
Office/clerical (5)
Instructor/trainer (6)
Maintenance (7)
Counselor/other professional (8)
Janitor (9)
Unsure (10) (go to q. 42)
Other (11) _____

If item is mentioned, code "1"; if not mentioned, code "0".

c. [If No], Why wouldn't you accept a promotion? (DON'T READ)
(anything else)?

Like present work
Too much pressure
SSI/SSDI loss
Not qualified
Other _____

42. Where do you think you would you be working if you didn't work here? 42. _____
(DON'T READ) (anything else)?

Private industry (1)
Another shop (2)
Self-employed (3) _____
Not working (4)
Don't Know (5)
Other (6) _____

Finally, I have a few questions about organizations and laws related to blind people.

43. a. Have you heard of any of the following groups of blind people? (READ)

If item is mentioned, code "1"; if not mentioned, code "0".

The American Council of the Blind/State Chapter
The Blinded Veterans Association
The National Federation of the Blind/State Chapter
Other organization of blind people you know of
(Name) _____

- b. Are you member of any of the groups? 43(b). _____

(1) Yes (0) No (*go to q. 44*)

- c. [If Yes], Which group(s)?

The American Council of the Blind/State Chapter
The Blinded Veterans Association
The National Federation of the Blind/State Chapter

Other _____

Other _____

44. Do you have any comments about any of these groups?

ACB: _____

BVA: _____

NFB: _____

Other group(s): _____

45. a. Have you ever heard of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act? 45(a). _____

(1) Yes _____ (0) No _____ (go to q. 46)

b. Please tell me what you know about the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act. 45(b). _____
(Do they know about it?)

Yes(1)

No (0) (go to q. 46)

(Record comments)

46. a. Have you ever heard of the Fair Labor Standards Act? 46(a). _____

Yes(1) No (0) (*go to q. 47*)

b. Please tell me what you know about the Fair Labor Standards Act. 46(b). _____
(*Do they know about it?*)

Yes(1)
No (0) (*go to q. 47*)

(*record comments*)

47. Have you ever heard of the Americans with Disabilities Act? 47(a). _____

Yes (1) No (0) (*go to q. 48*)

b. [If Yes], Has ADA affected your life: 47(b). _____

Yes (1) No (0) (*go to q. 48*)

c. In which areas of your life has ADA had a positive effect?

If item is mentioned, code "1"; if not mentioned, code "0".

Employment _____
Social Life/Recreation _____
Peoples attitude toward blindness _____
Transportation _____
Other _____

d. Negative effects?

48. a. Prior to my interviewing you today, had you ever heard of the National Industries for the Blind? 48(a). _____

Yes(1) No (0)

b. Please tell me what you know about National Industries for the Blind. 48(b). _____
(Do they know about it?)

Yes(1) No (0) (go to q. 49)

(Record comments)

49. Do you have any other major problems besides blindness? _____

Yes (1) No (0)

[If Yes], please tell me what they are

Thank you very much for your time and attention to these questions. Do you have any questions of me or any comments you would like to make about your work or about this interview?

DO NOT ASK QUESTIONS 49 & 50, BUT, RECORD YOUR PERCEPTIONS.

49. Did this respondent seem to have any significant disabilities in addition to blindness? Which?

	Yes	No
Physical	_____	_____
Sensory	_____	_____
Mental/emotional	_____	_____
Learning, including retardation	_____	_____
Other	_____	

50. How difficult would you say it was to communicate with this person? 50. _____

Extremely difficult (5)
Very difficult (4)
Somewhat difficult (3)
Slightly difficult (2)
Not at all difficult (1)

(If code 2-5) What was the difficulty? (could be the setting or individual)

INTERVIEWER _____ Date _____

Time End _____

CODE THE ANSWERS AFTER THE INTERVIEW HAS ENDED

HV 1711 1994 Survey of Direct
M 781 Labor Workers Who Are
M 72 Blind and Employed by NIB
1994 Affil. Ind. for the Blind

HV 1711 1994 Survey of Direct
M 781 Labor Workers Who Are
M 72 Blind & Employed by
1994 NIB Affil. Ind.

TITLE

DATE DUE	BORROWER'S NAME

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND, INC
11 PENN PLAZA - STE. 300
NEW YORK, N Y 10001

DEMCO



Mississippi State
UNIVERSITY